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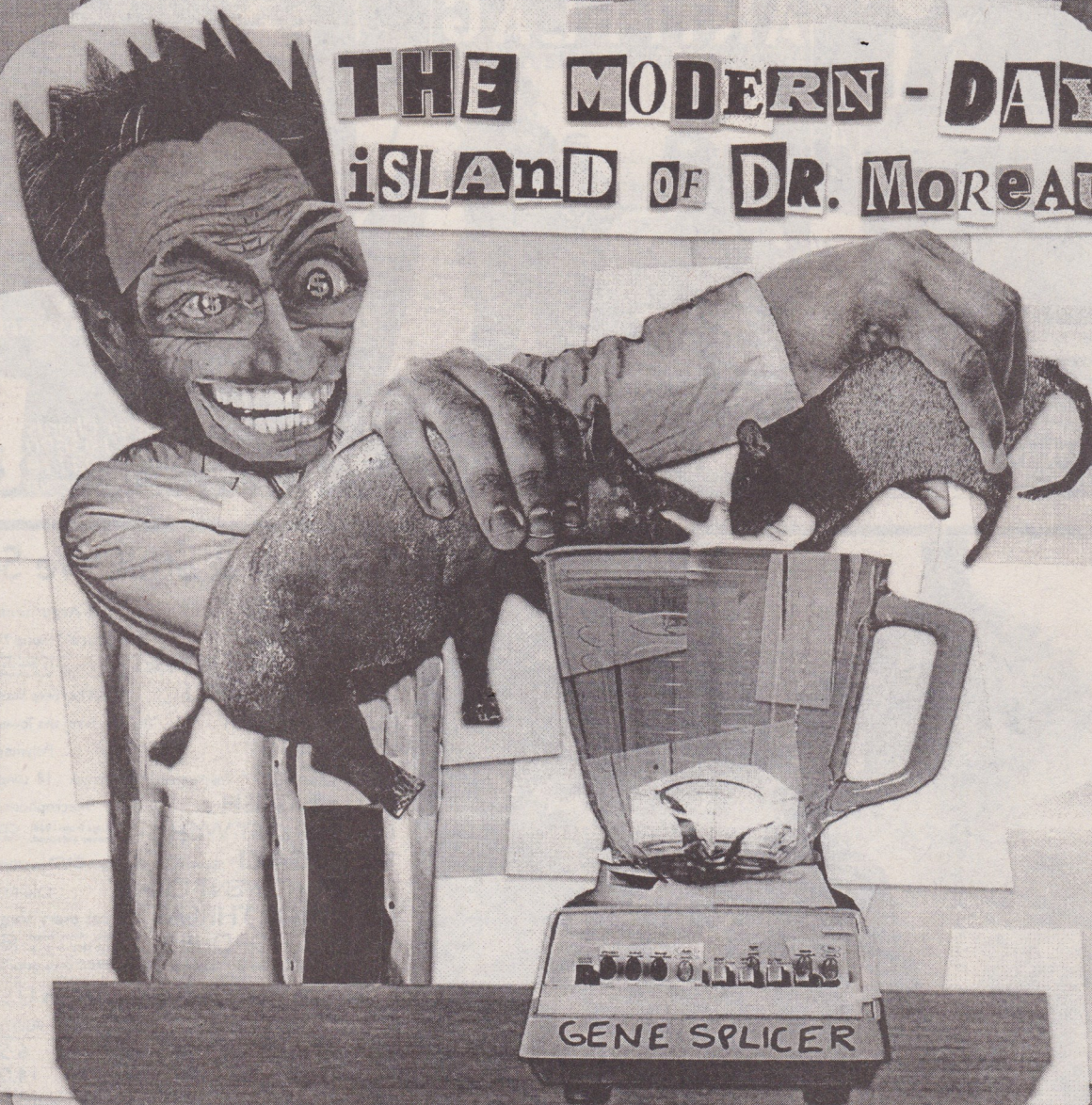
IMPACT

October/November '01

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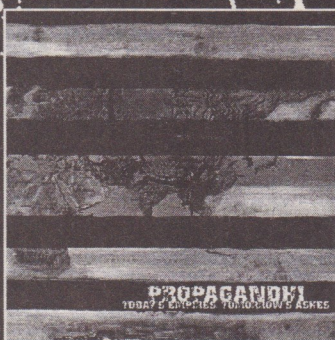
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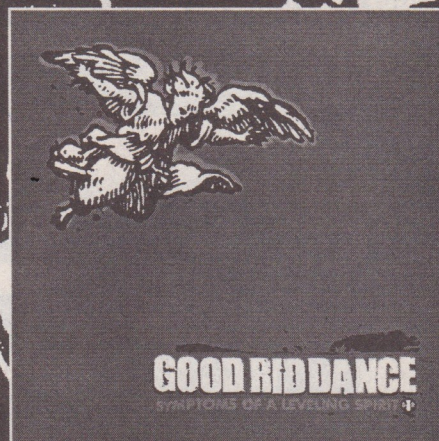


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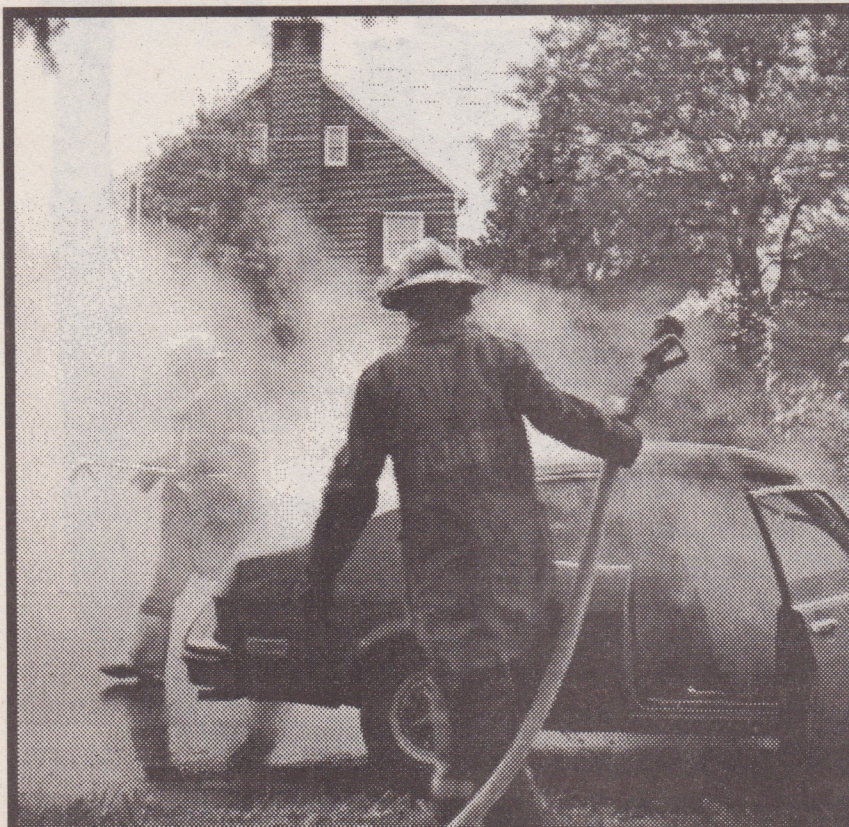


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things within

IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 35 • OCTOBER/NOVEMBER '01



art by eric spiller

THE MODERN - DAY ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

by Heather Moore

Virtually every species of domesticated animal has been tampered with as scientists attempt to create "new and improved" companion animals, research tools, and food sources. Non-allergenic cats, glow-in-the-dark bunnies, mutant monkeys and other transgenic (genetically altered) animals have made international news and raised the ire of many people who feel that it is unethical for scientists to play God with animals' lives. • PAGE 28

"...it is difficult to picture the great Creator conceiving of a program of one creature (which He has made) using another living creature for purposes of experimentation. There must be other, less cruel ways of obtaining knowledge."

-- Adlai Stevenson, American statesman (1835-1914)

"Evolution as such is no longer a theory for a modern author. It is as much a fact as that the earth revolves around the sun."

-- Ernst Mayr, Evolutionary Biologist

CONTENTS:

Notes From the Cultural Wasteland by Morris Sullivan: Weighing the cultural impact of the September 11th attacks. • PAGE 8

Want Some Justice in Your Coffee? by Sam MacDonald: Using the market to make social change by supporting Fair Trade. • PAGE 9

Toaster Time on the Potomac by Danny Schechter: Fighting for media reform and putting people before profits in broadcasting. • PAGE 10

Over-Priced Musings by Don Pflaster: The Euro Nation -- Is Europe ready and willing to be centralized? • PAGE 12

Targeting Children by John F. Borowski: Exposing industry's campaign to redefine environmental education. • PAGE 16

COMIC: The K Chronicles by Keith Knight • PAGE 21

The Making of a Terrorist, Part I by Morris Sullivan: How America's involvement in the middle east might have helped prepare Osama bin Laden for his role in the largest terrorist act in history. • PAGE 22

Philip Morris Sees the Light by Wayne Grytting: Philip Morris has found a new tactic -- promoting the benefits to society of premature deaths from smoking. • PAGE 24

A New Thanksgiving Tradition That's Really for the Birds by Teresa D'Amico: This Thanksgiving, families are participating in a new tradition -- saving an animal instead of serving one. • PAGE 26

Evolution Without God by Gary Sloan: Given the rampant ignorance of the case for nontheistic evolution, a new brief is in order. • PAGE 34

COMIC: Minimum Security by Stephanie McMillan • PAGE 39

Did Satire Have To Die, Too? by Adam Finley: Rationalizing the need for humor, even during such tragic times. • PAGE 40

COMICS: The Muddlemarch by Neal Skorpen • PAGE 41

The Big Bully by David Borden: Our nation's drug war bullies manage to cause a lot of damage. Who will stop the Big Bully? • PAGE 45

Who's Behind the Lens of the Camera? by J.C. Carnahan: How Americans' privacy and the nation's security could clash. • PAGE 46

Quickies - A Little Bit On A Lot of Records • PAGES 50-57

Activist Event Listings: Join a protest, attend a rally. • PAGE 57

The Truth Behind the Fur Trade by Sharie Lesniak: You could easily be buying products made with dog or cat fur, using child labor, and not even know it. • PAGE 58

QUOTES:

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covering issues the way the media should

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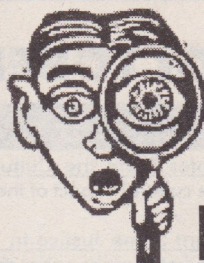
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A Fact from IMPACT: Scientists say that pigs, unlike all other domestic animals, arrive at solutions by thinking them through. Pigs can be, and have been, taught to accomplish almost any feat a dog can master, and usually more quickly.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From The Editor

Attention: Those with dark skin and/or turbans. You are a suspect. You are guilty until proven innocent. You should be subject to interrogation.

Those are the feelings of the nearly 70% of Americans who think law-enforcement officers should be allowed to randomly stop people who fit the theoretical description of a terrorist (AKA racial profiling). This is according to a *Los Angeles Times* poll conducted September 13-15th, 2001.

"We can't blanket a whole ethnic group," said William H. Webster, a former FBI director. Webster is on a commission that is investigating problems with security at the FBI. "But this area is going to have to be rethought. If people are coming from a country that we think harbors terrorists, then they are going to have to be subjected to substantial scrutiny."

Even more direct were comments by Rep. John Cagoksey (R-LA) who stated, "If I see someone (who) comes in that's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over." Cooksey later apologized for his comments. But his sentiment is clear.

Passenger profiling by airlines is common practice. However, in the past it was inconsistent and was at the discretion of airline employees. For instance, if a passenger paid in cash or had a passport from a particular country, they might be flagged as a security concern. After a black passenger sued over this form of profiling (and won), the FAA scrapped the process in favor of a computerized screening system called Computer-Assisted Passenger Screening, or CAPS.

However, the criteria used by CAPS to determine which passengers to scrutinize has been kept classified, causing skeptics to

remain critical of the system. "We don't really know how effective it is, because we don't know exactly how it works," said David Sobel, staff attorney for the Electronic Privacy Information Center, an advocacy group in Washington.

While that system is a disturbing invasion of privacy, it is a far cry from allowing law enforcement to do the same thing to citizens anywhere—airports, subways, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. Hopefully the public's support for this kind of racial profiling is just a short-term reaction to the horrible tragedy of the September 11th terrorist attacks. The same sort of "knee-jerk" reactions happened after the Olympic bombing in Atlanta and the Oklahoma City bombing when most polls found Americans supported more domestic spying and increased security at places such as shopping malls.

Obviously, airport security must be increased. But that security should apply to all travelers, white, black, Asian, and otherwise, not just those that look of Arab descent. Even Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft has stated that he believes racial profiling is unconstitutional. Yet, there have been numerous reports of innocent Arab and Middle Eastern people being removed from planes.

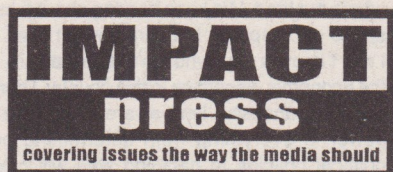
But these kinds of reactions, to give up bits and pieces of our most cherished freedoms, is exactly the opposite of what America and Americans should be doing and supporting. If we start to implement racial profiling, security checks at malls or any other form of invasion of privacy, violation of our freedoms or considering one guilty until proven otherwise, we are eliminating exactly what sets America apart from so many other places. And it is "freedom-loving people" that George W. Bush claims we are fighting for. So, when you see a Muslim person at the supermarket or restaurant and even one ounce of suspicion enters your mind, remember what Jon Carroll of the *San Francisco Chronicle* said in a September 17th article: "The hijackers are no more typical Muslims than Timothy McVeigh is a typical Christian."

• craig mazer •

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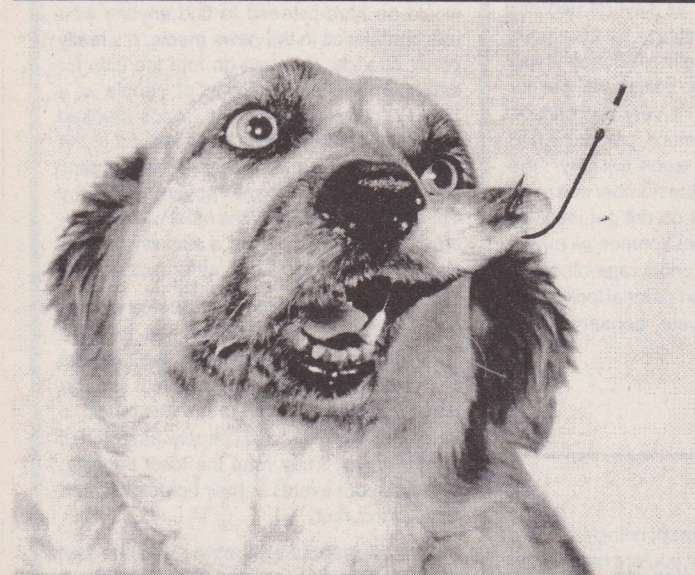
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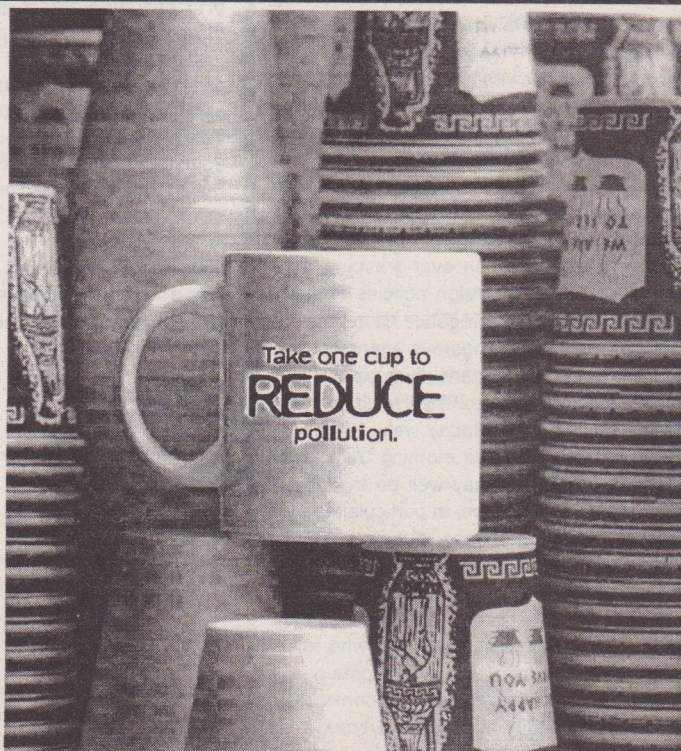
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Speak Your Mind. . .

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IMPACT:

It's 1:10pm Tuesday (9/11) and the correctional facility I live in will not be granting a recreation period today, nor the GED preparation class that I assist. The President's taped speech is being initially aired and I listen to my cellmate's TV. "Make no mistake..." - Didn't he just say that? For once, W's words warrant further repetition. Make no mistake: This attack won't go unpunished. The prevailing sentiment appears to be 'let's make sure this never happens again.'

Sure. How? Will we, as a nation, drop bombs on Middle Eastern farmers? Wage ceaseless economic warfare on millions of struggling poor? (Perhaps you are familiar with our Cuba policy.) Maybe stage a mockery of justice by international trial, in which the United States acts not only as plaintiff, but judge and juror as well? All have been employed before. Just how will any of these ensure a similar attack does not occur? Deterrence is a fallacy and an increasingly costly one. How many lives will be spent - to crime, to terrorism, to war - before it is abandoned?

I fear today's attack will most likely be met with zealous reprisal. (Bush swears it will.) The suffering of the victims and their families finds accompaniment with that of those chosen to slake our vengeance and mask the fragile nature of comfortable, American routine. Furthermore, what may prove broadest is the suffering of our own ethics and civil rights. What will we relinquish in order to purchase the groggy complacency required to sleep-walk through the life our culture offers, maintained by an ever-grasping government? Whose foreign policies and national affluence and arrogance have built anger and disgust in dangerous agencies; and both have chosen citizens' lives as the medium for violent dispute. The President's first words for the nation today were "Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward." This may well be true, but I submit that our freedom, in particular, is in a danger that will not wane, but increase, as days pass. It springs from us. In our fear, will we all play the faceless - and voiceless - cowards who give up their rights, idle as they are stripped from our neighbors, who tolerate subsequent murder to settle some grisly, jingoist score? Representative democracy incurs responsibility unto those governed and, in terrible events such as today's, people pay dearly for what has been done in their names and quiet 'consent.' Make no mistake: I didn't ask for it either.

Peace,
Matt Boser, Suffield, CT

IMPACT:

(Responding to "From the Editor" Issue #34) Although I disagree very strongly with your political beliefs, I respect your publication because I believe that it is very effective at persuading (indoctrinating, if you prefer) the culture you are targeting. I subscribe to the theory that the Kyoto Treaty would do little to limit whatever effect man may have on global climate. In a daily commentary titled "Europe's Kyoto Scam", author Patrick J. Michaels, senior fellow of environmental studies at the Cato Institute, suggests the Kyoto Treaty's intent may be to level the global playing field so that European industrial economies can compete with American industry. This would not surprise me, especially after hearing of the French faction that would use the UN to redistribute wealth from lesser-taxed and more economically prosperous nations, to highly taxed but less prosperous nations. This essay also states that if Kyoto was adhered to by every ratifying nation, we would limit warming by thirteen one-hundredths of a degree Fahrenheit over the next fifty years. UN and other like-minded climatologists publicize worst case scenarios of several degrees of warming over the next few decades as a scare tactic. To them, what is 0.13 degrees Fahrenheit, as several degrees of warming would most certainly be disastrous to climactic processes. I believe Michaels' way of comparing "how many bangs we get for each carbon dioxide buck" is very appropriate. When we compare emissions per unit GDP adjusted for the area of each country, "the United States comes in as the number one most efficient nation on earth." I do not get involved in the hysteria that the environmental movement has stirred up and I encourage others to take a more reasonable and rational look at environmental issues. Recycle, conserve, and educate indeed.

Sincerely,
Brent R. Pomerhn

IMPACT:

Kyoto is only Babel-only (responding to "From the Editor" Issue #34). And you are helping the Babylonians to replace the United States with a revived Roman Empire, that is to say the New European Union. That nightmare the world endured under Hitler in the 1930's and 40's. This global stuff is only to dismantle the British/American power centers and replace their dominant positions with a German led Europe. Once done, they will be able to carry on the work of Adolf Hitler without fear of the British/Americans, because that threat will have been eliminated. You are helping these world terrorists to do their work with this mis-information and completely blind mindless approach you take.

Rethink your position. Build up the USA, don't tear it down. Yes, we must protect and take care of this great land. But, Kyoto is not the way.

Joe Rolke

IMPACT:

I live in a small Wisconsin town, in a farming area. These are people who believed in/lived for/fought for the American Dream. I don't know anyone today who isn't aware of the fact that all of this was changed, that the dream was killed off. (Responding to "Across the Great Divide" Issue #34)

The economic situation for most people has not improved, and we all know it. We have seen for ourselves that hard work does NOT pay, and "playing by the rules" gets you nowhere but tired. We keep hearing about these spurts of prosperity, but sure haven't seen it. I don't know a soul who isn't keenly aware of the economic disparities in this country. I don't know anyone who isn't aware of corporate power in everything from determining our political policies to deciding who will have access to basic medical care.

A big change over the past 20 years: you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who has confidence in the news media. It's really pretty strange: you can go into the city, for example, and see a crowd of people at a protest, police everywhere, roads blocked off, and there won't be a word about it in the news. A problem in Wisconsin is that so many people viewed the former governor, Tommy Thompson, as probably the most corrupt governor in the state's history, a man who makes Newt Gingrich look like a rather nice guy.

I don't believe our news media uttered a negative word about him since the mid-1980's. I think most people are aware of the fact that the media provides all the news that our corporate/political "leadership" wants us to have. For the most part, people have tuned out the news. They read the local paper to find out about events in their hometown, and discard the rest.

But the proverbial final straw was the last election. Even those who voted Republican are still in shock about that one nagging, fundamental fact: George Bush didn't win the election, but he took over the White House. People just seem to feel numb about this.

People are outraged, but they don't know what to do. They feel utterly powerless. A fact that few like to admit is that any movement for change won't happen until/unless there is someone in a leadership role. It's hard to make any sense out of a group of people all speaking at once, and we need one person who will speak for us, on our

Speak Your Mind. . .

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behalf. I don't see that happening.

So, we just plod through each day, hoping for the best, hoping we don't get "pink slipped" when we go to work tomorrow. It's easy enough to say that the people should, for example, declare a national strike, but who will lead? Without a leader, who will follow?

Even the news sources (as few and far between as they might be) that aren't part of the corporate mainstream have been unable to focus on the issues that could bring people together. Those who are worried about providing for their children's basic needs really aren't interested in subjects ranging from Monica to the Mideast. They care about here and now.

It will take much, much more than armchair activists to move the people to action. It will take real leadership, someone who can focus on the issues that are of extreme importance to the people. It would also take tremendous effort to unify people.

As things are, people might want to "take to the streets", but they are afraid of the risks. It is one thing to bring a group of college students together. It is something entirely different to convince people to put their jobs—and therefore their families—at risk.

People have more reason now than they did a few years ago to fear losing a job. First, the job market has changed so that many are working low-wage, no benefits, short-term jobs, and secondly, there is no social safety net to fall into when the job disappears.

There could and should be a non-mainstream newspaper that dares to focus on these economic issues, the sort who would dare discuss issues such as poverty and our anti-poor culture rather than foreign policy and political theory. There is a place for both of those important topics, but where is the media that represents the people, ordinary working people, the poor, etc? To date, I haven't come across a word about one of the biggest job market changes in modern Wisconsin, which came out of welfare repeal, and that's the increasing number of jobs that can pay a growing number of people sub-minimum wages. Problem there is that the anti-welfare campaign was so successful that no one has bothered to consider how these policies impact far, far more than former welfare recipients.

We are at a point in history where significant change is inevitable.

If we could find a way to enable the majority of people—low-wage, working class people—to be heard, we could anticipate changes for the better.

Dianka Fabian

IMPACT:

Molly Lanzarotta, a writer for so-called "United for a Fair Economy," wondered, "What words will we carve on George W. Bush's monument?" (From the article "Across the Great Divide" Issue #34) Answer: "He angered those who would covet their neighbor's goods." Ms. Lanzarotta sure is angry, isn't she? Perhaps if she stopped getting so greedy for the unearned, she'd be able to get a life of her own.

M. Iddings
Antelope, California

IMPACT:

I want to compliment you on your excellent article on the wealth gap ("Across the Great Divide" Issue #34). If only the mainstream media and more journalists would recognize what is going on in this nation and do a better job reporting truths which to every thinking, educated and under-privileged person should be self-evident, we would not be headed towards conditions prevailing in third-world countries. If all of those people affected negatively by the economic realities you describe would vote their pocket book, the mega-rich wouldn't have a chance to drown out their voices.

Keep up the good work. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lydia Bell

IMPACT:

Is it fair to take from those who EARN the money and give it to those who don't? (Responding to "Across the Great Divide" Issue #34)

If this happens the achievers will see no reason to work harder or longer or dream up new products/services/ methods. Stagnation. European economy shows this now. Union and government workers are good US examples.

I work with some former Eastern Europeans. When Americans propose such "economic leveling" I remember that one of them commented: "We tried that. It didn't work."

From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs—sounds like K. Marx to me.

Dixiepolack

IMPACT:

I just loved your piece "Across the Great Divide" (Issue #34). Why is it that so many Americans are missing the obvious signs as

to what is happening in this country? So many still vote for politicians who support policies that are making the situation even worse. They do so out of sheer ignorance, for they are not the wealthy, yet vote the way the wealthy want. I work with many of these people. Hard working and ignorant of the truth. They believe the propaganda and rhetoric spewed out by the powerful. It's sickening, just sickening. Glad to see someone is using the power of the media to enlighten and inform, not brainwash. Thank you.

Susie Bell
Gilbert, AZ

IMPACT:

I really enjoyed reading "Across the Great Divide" by Molly Lanzarotta (Issue #34). It was a great article. Thank you for printing it.

Tony M. Davis

IMPACT:

Keep up the good work to help so many miserably treated farm animals ("Gestation Crates: No Way to Treat a Pig" Issue #34). We live in the midst of Seaboard Farms hog raising operations. At the same time, our daughter has raised two pigs for 4-H projects. The 4-H pigs lived outside in pens with dirt and other pigs around them and got lots of attention—they are smart, affectionate animals and respond extremely well to contact with humans. How sad that factory farming deprives millions of animals of their natural habitat—plus the resulting pork product is awful.

C.A. Thomas

IMPACT:

I just finished reading this article ("Did Jesus Exist and Does It Really Matter?" Issue #30) and I can say this much: Being born and raised a Jew and then becoming an agnostic for a good portion of my adult life and then becoming a Messianic Jew (Jews For Jesus) and then reverting back to currently being an Agnostic once again, I can definitely agree with quite a few of his viewpoints. My wife, who is Roman Catholic, simply dismisses me as a Church basher. I assure the viewing audience, I am not. I am open, once again to people's opinions as well as their rights to freedom of thought and belief. I could only hope that people will cease their narrow minded way of thinking, or at least not condemn anyone for the way they think. Gee, come to think of it, wouldn't that be judgmental of our brothers and sisters. What a bunch of hypocrites!

Gary J. A., Bohemia, NY

Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



A couple of weeks ago, I interviewed a cop. I had proposed a story to a local paper about "how to be a good neighbor," and after talking to some property managers and the like, thought it would be interesting to get the law enforcement perspective on the issue.

I made an appointment with a nearby sheriff's department community relations officer. I had first tried to set up the interview for a week earlier, on an overcast September Tuesday morning. I had gone about my usual business, sitting on my balcony looking out at a gray sky over a gray lake while having my first cup of coffee. I'd emailed a couple of editors and begun calling to set up story interviews.

I have a tiny, battery-powered television at my desk; as I often do, I had turned it on for background noise while working, tuned to a morning news magazine. The commentator was babbling through some fluff piece, and I had pretty much tuned him out. Then something caught my attention; I looked at the screen to see the World Trade Center on fire. For a second, I thought I was watching a movie trailer for the latest action film.

My plans for the day changed pretty dramatically at that point. Needless to say, the cop was not available to schedule any interviews. Nor was anyone else for that matter. I had made plans to meet my oldest and dearest friend for lunch, and assumed, since he's an officer in the reserves, that he'd be unavailable. As it turned out, however, he was free; no one knew exactly what to do with reservists, yet.

We met for lunch and, as I'm sure everyone else in America did that day, we talked about what we'd seen on television that morning. He had watched it on the television at the office, and he mentioned that same feeling I'd had: that he was watching a movie trailer.

He and I were teenagers together at the tail end of the Vietnam era. Over the years, we have taken opposite sides on virtually every political position, beginning the day we went to the mall and he enlisted in the Navy. I watched and wondered how anyone could actually want to be in the military at that point—it seemed unimaginably absurd. However, our political differences have never affected our friendship. I have learned much from him, and while

our arguments often tested my beliefs, they helped me refine and strengthen them. I believe he feels similarly.

He's a historian, of sorts, so I asked him about the historical perspective on the tragic events of the morning. As we were talking, he said something that chilled me to the bone: "You know, we both have seventeen-year-old sons." That comment hit me with such force it almost knocked me over. I felt as sick as I did that day in the mall, watching my friend enlist and wondering if I might soon be drafted, sitting in a jungle, fired upon by strangers with Asian faces.

"They can't have my son," I said to myself, but I looked across the table at my buddy in uniform, and I bit my tongue to keep from screaming it out loud.

My buddy and I have continued to talk about the current "war." At one point, he said of the terrorists, "What's significant to me is that these guys made a big mistake: they killed a Hollywood producer. Hollywood has tremendous sway in the world; movies already portray the Arab radical as a villain." Now Hollywood and the rest of the media will be more supportive of any war effort, and Americans will follow their lead.

During World War II, he pointed out, we had decisive victories, all reported and supported by the media. "The media was hostile to the war in Vietnam," he reminded me. Without media support, the war lost the American public and ultimately floundered.

The media had already begun comparing the morning's terrorist strike to Pearl Harbor. I mentioned that I hoped that, if it had to be either, that

Tuesday was "another Pearl Harbor, and not another Tet Offensive."

Back to the cop: after a few days, things returned to a semblance of normalcy and I called the sheriff's department again to set up the interview. The officer turned out to be a pretty nice guy. He had clearly put a lot of thought into the topic, and he had some great ideas about how to get along with the Joneses. At one point, he waxed philosophically on the subject of neighbors and neighborhoods.

The media had already begun comparing the morning's terrorist strike to Pearl Harbor. I mentioned that I hoped that, if it had to be either, that Tuesday was "another Pearl Harbor, and not another Tet Offensive."

(SEPTEMBER, continued on page 43)

Want Some Justice in Your Coffee?

Using the market to make social change

By Sam MacDonald

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS KICK THEIR BRAINS INTO GEAR each morning with a tall mug of steaming coffee. Until recently, the most important decision they had to make was, "one lump or two?" But now, the sleepy masses can bring their sense of economic fair play to bear as well: They can choose to gulp certified "Fair Trade" coffee. The product promises impoverished Third World growers a larger portion of the profits, while consumers get a more eco-friendly cup of java. There's more at stake than what's in the percolator, however. Fair Trade coffee may demonstrate that compassionate social policies don't have to pour from Congress's spout. They can be shaped by individual shoppers armed with a few spare coins and a little information.

Massachusetts-based Equal Exchange pioneered "fairly traded gourmet coffee direct from small-scale farmer co-ops in Latin America, Africa and Asia" in 1986. Until now, however, the product has been limited to relatively high-end outlets. That's changing in a hurry. Starbucks began offering a Fair Trade blend through its 2,400 retail outlets last October. Earlier this month, the Safeway grocery chain announced that it would start carrying a line of premium products from Seattle's Best Coffee, including a Fair Trade-certified French roast.

The move is based on two developments. First, wholesale coffee prices are at an all-time low. Farmers see as little as 20 cents for a pound of coffee that retails in U.S. stores for as much as \$10. Government programs in Third World nations expanded the world supply when prices were high, and the resulting glut has brought economic chaos.

Enter TransFair USA. This California-based non-profit has launched the "Fair Trade" concept onto the national scene. TransFair slaps a seal of approval onto coffee entering the U.S. only if it meets a specific set of criteria. According to Deborah Hirsch, outreach coordinator for TransFair, the organization puts people on the ground in coffee-producing countries to ensure that farmers receive at least \$1.26 per pound—as much as six times the going rate. In addition, TransFair provides assistance that allows farmers to unify into co-ops and bypass expensive middlemen. People who are willing to pay a little more for socially conscious products (Hirsch estimated the cost difference comes in at about 25 to 50 cents per pound) can use the label to be sure their coffee meets these rigorous standards.

Kimberly Easson, marketing director of TransFair, said Fair Trade-certified coffee should capture 1 percent of the U.S. market by 2005, an effort that is gaining steam through deals with Starbucks and Safeway. "We've only been around for two years, so there has been pretty incredible market acceptance," Easson said. The growth is not unprecedented. In Europe, where organizations affiliated with TransFair have been certifying coffee, tea, orange juice, chocolate and other products for a few years longer, market share is as high as 5 percent.

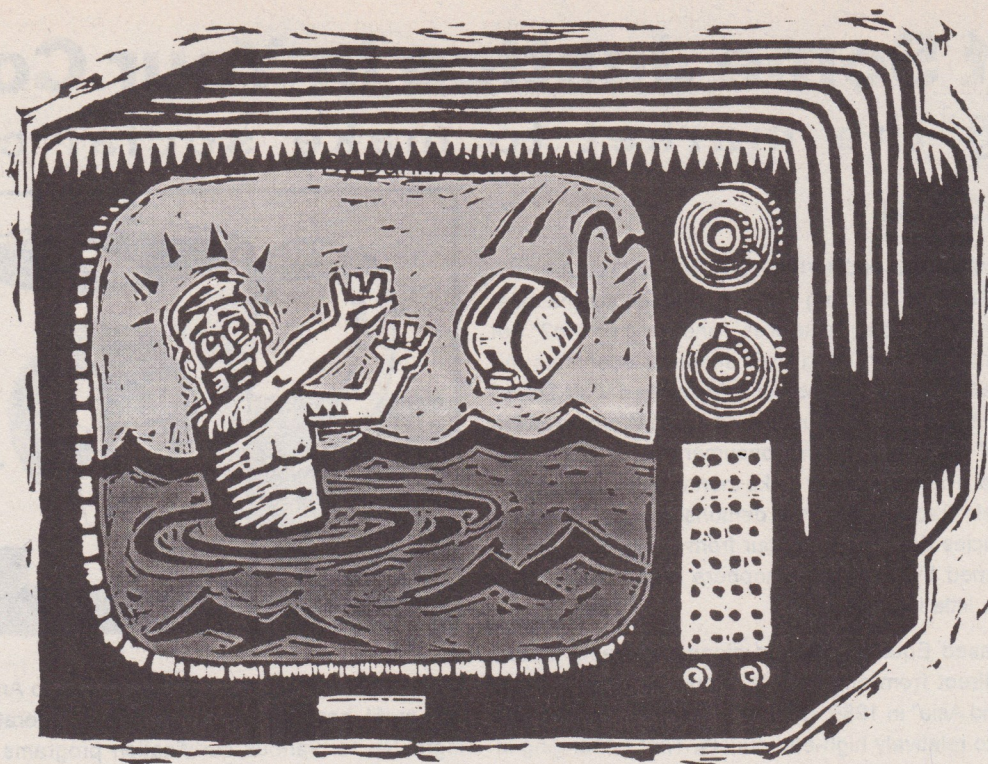


Other organizations are pitching in. Co-op America, a D.C.-based non-profit, has formed the Fair Trade Federation to act as a clearinghouse for various certification programs popping up around the country. It also publishes the National Green Pages, a business directory featuring everything from eco-friendly lumber companies to labor-friendly investment advisors. "Our mission is to leverage the power of consumption choices and investment choices and business practices to affect social and environmental change," said Chris O'Brien, managing director of Co-op America's Business Network. "In other words, [we are] using market-based strategies to affect social change." Corporate America is beginning to realize that social conscience can be an effective marketing wedge. Starbucks' slick Fair Trade brochure, for example, claims that, "When you purchase Fair Trade Coffee, you know you're making a difference in the lives of coffee farmers."

These very issues will be the center of debate later this year when Congress takes up the matter of Trade Promotion Authority. The administration wants the right to negotiate international trade agreements and submit them for an up or down vote. Democrats in Congress won't budge unless they are assured the agreements will contain plenty of labor and environmental riders so American consumers and corporations won't exploit poor foreign workers. If people buy products with the Fair Trade label, that job is already being done. If they don't, Democrats may have to admit that Americans prefer a cheap cup of joe to a politicized ideal of "economic justice." The beauty of Fair Trade labeling is that it allows consumers to vote with their dollars. ☐

Sam MacDonald (smacdonald@reason.com) is Washington editor of REASON, a magazine of politics and culture available in print and on the Web at www.reason.com.

Editor's Note: This article is not meant to be an endorsement of Starbucks or Safeway by IMPACT press. IMPACT prefers you support small, independent stores. We also encourage Starbucks and Safeway to increase the visibility of their fair-trade coffee and ensure no genetically modified ingredients are used. However, we do support fair trade and proactive business practices, regardless of the company. In that regard, both stores deserve a little praise, as tempered as it may be. *More info:* www.globalexchange.org



Toaster Time On The Potomac

by Danny Schecter • art by Eric Spitler

"It's time to move away from thinking of broadcasters as trustees and time to treat them the way that everyone else in this society does, that is, as a business. Television is just another appliance. It's a toaster with pictures."

Those were the memorable droppings of a man named Mark Fowler. Ronald Reagan picked him to run the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the U.S.'s poor excuse for a media regulatory body. Echoing the historic Republican theme that "the business of America is business," he summed up how 'corporate-think' had insinuated itself into the work of an agency set up to protect the public interest from corporate self-interest.

Fowler's candor was expressed back in that watershed year of 1984, an irony that George Orwell, the author of the book that made that year infamous, would have found delicious. Perhaps it is fitting that in a sizzling summer in which folks in our nation's capital say they feel like they live in a toaster, Mark Fowler has reemerged.

Only this time his name is Michael Powell.

And its toaster time again.

Michael is an "SOG," a 38-year-old Son of a General — Gulf War leader and current Secretary of State Colin Powell. Powell the Younger is the current chair of the FCC; according to Brendan Kerner's informative story in New York's venerable *Village Voice*, "If he plays his cards right, he could well become the first African-American president." Among Powell Jr.'s claims to fame, Kerner writes, is that he is a "younger and brighter version of George W.

Bush," as if that is saying much.

A typical Powellism does to logic what Bush does to language. When asked about the Digital Divide, he quipped: "I think there's a Mercedes divide. I'd like to have one; I can't afford one." His salary is \$133,700 a year.

Brace yourself, America. You have been warned.

A Nation Asleep

Most of America is sleeping when it comes to understanding how what we see and hear on TV and radio every day is affected by what a bunch of lawyers decide in a boardroom in Washington. And it is certainly true that arcane talk of the "deployment of the infrastructure" and complicated, Byzantine standards are hard to fathom, much less keep you from dozing.

The media industries understand just how essential control over regulatory bodies is in their bid to aggregate more power. That's why they spend so much money on political contributions to congressional representatives and senators who sit on regulatory committees, and why, while media jobs are disappearing in outlets worldwide, media lobbyists are building extensions on their patios because of all the work that's being tossed their way.

These lobbyists are like bagmen spreading manna from media heaven. Media companies gave the Bush campaign over a million dollars, but there is more to it than campaign contributions. They

regularly dispense favors, such as a fully paid Paris junket costing \$18,910 that recently went to Powell's patron, Republican Representative Billy Tauzin, a good old boy from Louisiana and chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

But this is chump change compared to how media companies benefit when FCC decisions go their way. A recent example was the gift bestowed by the FCC on Republican Rupert Murdoch, whose Fox News practically got Dubya elected (while GW's first cousin John Ellis ran some of the right-wing network's campaign coverage). Murdoch was just given a waiver of cross-ownership rules permitting him to buy two local TV stations in New York, el numero uno media market. This despite his already owning *The New York Post*, a political pulpit posing as a newspaper. (Rupert's son, Lachlan, recently engineered the firing of that paper's best known — well, only — liberal columnist, Jack Newfield, replacing him with Victoria Gotti, daughter of jailed Mafia don John Gotti. Is it possible that children, in this case Michael and Lachlan, are even more rabid than their fathers?)

Media-policy monitor Jeff Chester of the Center for Media Education was apoplectic about the FCC's latest groveling to Murdoch, noting: "What was not said by Chairman Powell in approving this media merger decision was more important than what he said. Powell ignored the merger's narrowing impact on local voices, the threats to local TV journalism, the giveaway of additional digital beachfront spectrum, and Murdoch's vital hold in Gemstar and its electronic program guide. Nor was Murdoch's attempt to further expand his media empire through the acquisition of Direct-TV included in Powell's analysis."

In an editorial on the subject, *The New York Times* (which does not disclose its own ownership of TV stations) deferentially calls for a Congressional "airing" of the issues. It opines gently: "Congress may now wish to explore new ways of ensuring diversity and competition in an industry of fundamental importance to free expression." Guess they consider it too radical to call for an investigation, which is what is needed, not a mere "airing." And phrases like "Congress may now wish" and "explore" bring mealy-mouthed liberalism to a new level. Don't we have enough hot air already?

Today Murdoch, Tomorrow?

Today, Murdoch is the beneficiary of the FCC's largesse. According to Chester, in the near future other public interest safeguards may be on the chopping block: "Likely to be either eliminated or fundamentally weakened are the national ownership cap, the local television multiple ownership rule, and the television/newspaper cross-ownership rule. These and other critical public interest rules have come under fierce legal and regulatory attack by such media giants as Viacom, News Corp., Disney, GE/NBC, and AOL-Time Warner."

Meanwhile, where are the forces with the political will to challenge these giveaways? On Capitol Hill, we have Senator Joe Lieberman, a vice presidential candidate now back to wagging his finger about vice, taking the industry to task for salacious content but avoiding key institutional issues. When so chastised, media moguls typi-

cally nod their heads with contrition and "concern," promise to tighten voluntary standards (the only kind they favor), and then continue to do whatever they want. It's been like that for years.

This is very tricky ground because it can easily slide into censorship and worse, as hip hop guru Russell Simmons told Lieberman and co. at a Senate hearing dealing with a system for rating entertainment for sex, violence and foul language. (Even though he wasn't invited to testify, he showed up anyway and was given a hearing.) "I want to make it clear: Most of the people you're indicting here today are black and are hip-hop," Simmons said. "Some of the songs you may find offensive — protest songs and other songs — are actually a reflection of the reality that needs to be expressed."

Conservative groups like Brent Bozell's Parents Television Council rave about the sex and violence polluting our children, but they want the industry to fix it, not the government, calling for more voluntary standards. In testimony to Congress, Bozell said: "No one likes government interference. Parents are outraged over the marketing and availability to children of violent, sexually graphic and vulgar entertainment. Hollywood wants parents to be the gatekeepers of what children watch and listen to. Calls for individual and corporate responsibility continue to increase as our nation looks for reasonable solutions to the cultural crisis at hand." His solution: more voluntarism.

The industry and its boosters have another mantra: "If you don't like it, don't watch it." Some years back, as part of the disastrous telecommunications "reform" bill of 1996, they went along with a techno-fix, a congressionally mandated "V-chip" added to new TV sets that would allow parents to block objectionable content. What's happened? According to a new study from the Kaiser Family Foundation, though 40 percent of American parents now own a TV equipped with a V-chip, only 17 percent of them — or seven percent of all parents — use it. That's a joke, not a reform. The study adds that more than half of all parents have consulted TV ratings to decide which shows their kids can watch.

I wonder if they would like traffic lights to be voluntary. Sure, the government shouldn't regulate lyrics, but faith in so-called free markets has ushered in a free market in filth, too. Could music companies and TV networks produce programming that promoted social values like encouraging customers to be citizens as well as consumers and get more involved in trying to improve society and better the world? Of course, they could. Are they? No way. Why? Because they believe that the cruder the content, the higher the return. It's not true, but why let facts get in the way of their single-minded obsession with profit making.

So where does this leave us? We can either keep clucking away at how awful it all is or get engaged in bringing other voices to the table and building a constituency for media reform. There are only three years to go before they may be playing "Hail to the Chief" to FCC wunderkind Michael Powell. That's not a lot of time. ☐

Danny Schechter, a TV producer with Globalvision and editor of mediachannel.org, is the author of News Disector: Passions, Pieces and Polemics (Akashic Books, 2001)

over-priced musings

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Don Pflaster



The Euro Nation

Life in the European Union is about to get pretty interesting.

On Tuesday, January 1, 2002, the "euro," which is already a monetary unit on paper, will be fully adopted as legal tender in twelve of the fifteen nations in the EU: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, and Finland. For two months there will be a period of dual currency, during which both forms of cash (old and new) will be spent, and all change will be given in euros. On February 28, each of the above countries' sovereign currency will be spent for the last time.

I meditated on the finality when I heard about it—for over two centuries, the modern French Franc has been the lifeblood and store of value for all goods and services sold and performed in France. And soon it will be no more, replaced by a currency that will supersede it and make the economy a twelfth of a greater whole.

Imagine suddenly waking up one morning and finding that we now share a common currency with all of the nations in North and Central America. Countries, regardless of their being richer or poorer, suddenly merge with your own, economically. The dollar, gone the way of the wood burning stove, useless and obsolete, replaced by newfangled cash called "northams." A hamburger at Wendy's now costs a half-northam. A tank of gas costs eleven northams. And your country no longer has the right to control its own economic policy, replaced by a continental central bank.

While this scary North American scenario is probably not going to happen for at least several decades, a similar one is going to happen in Europe in four months. And I wondered how many people in the general public had a say as to whether or not their nation was going to adopt the euro.

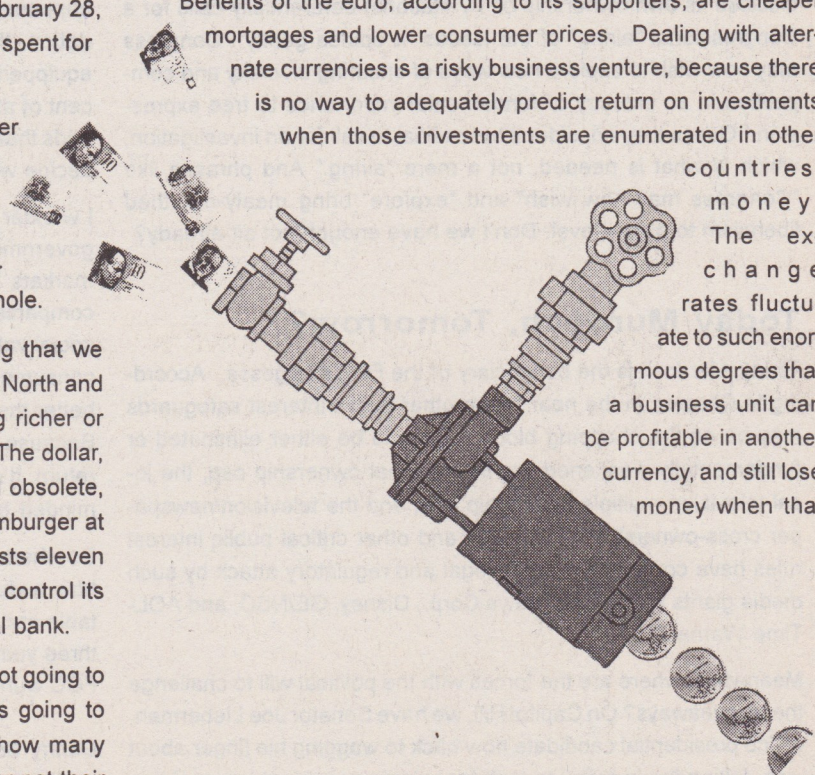
I found that the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in Europe was decided almost solely by parliaments of the EU member states. So far, Denmark is the *only* country of the fifteen whose citizens have had a direct referendum on euro adoption. The Danish have an enormous amount of welfare and very high taxes, and that's the way they like it. Accepting the euro would mean changing these comfortable economic conditions, and so they voted it down by a large margin. According to a May 2001 article in the *London Guardian*, an average of only 55 percent of people in the new Eurozone support the new currency, based on results of a poll conducted by Eurobarometer, which is published by the EU.

England and Sweden, the other EU states not joining the euro, are tiptoeing toward referendums, but aren't willing to take that risk. Britain's government has refrained from going in on the euro, taking a wait-and-see stance. It would cost Britain some 36 billion pounds to convert to euros, a hefty price tag considering that the economic benefits would probably not cover the costs for a very long time. Britain also has less unemployment than Eurozone, more reason to keep its economy to itself. So most of the reasons for not adopting the euro, I found, were reasons of self-interest. Governments are surprisingly reluctant to discuss any constitutional and political implications, dismissing them in favor of economic issues.

Benefits of the euro, according to its supporters, are cheaper mortgages and lower consumer prices. Dealing with alternate currencies is a risky business venture, because there is no way to adequately predict return on investments when those investments are enumerated in other

countries' money.

The exchange rates fluctuate to such enormous degrees that a business unit can be profitable in another currency, and still lose money when that



is translated to the currency of the home state. The euro smooths out these walls and leaves behind an open road upon which the commerce can flow with ease and less apprehension.

However, by adopting the euro, the new currency is thrusting together twelve nations of Europe who have enormous legal, economic, generational, and cultural differences that aren't likely to disappear in the near future. Because of that, labor mobility could be a tremendous problem across the Eurozone, and thoughts about contributions to social security and private pensions probably aren't going to mix. Differences in employment rates in certain regions will make it difficult for all the nations to exist under a single interest rate and living wage. Countries within the zone will not have the power to make the adjustments to their economy necessary to offset sharp up or down turns. This could turn out to be a tremendous shock to regional economic stability, with massive short and medium-term crises.

The consequences of a monetary union seem rather obvious and extremely ominous. History has arguably shown that the single most important force behind power, wars and influence is money. Economics is the true lord of our actions. A society operates because we need to perform favors for others to earn "favor coupons." We then use these coupons to obtain the favors that we need. These favors are the lifeblood of a nation, and currency is their measure. The self-contained system makes a country into a sort of organism, which then trades and interacts with other organisms.

When nations join together and seamlessly eliminate the economic barriers between them, the emergence of a superstate is the only logical consequence. If you are not part of the union, your former trading partners are no longer small rodents. They become a giant bear, a great economic bloc with muscle and ferocity. To protect this wealth, the government of it must conceivably strengthen and provide for a common defense. Leading European bankers and politicians do not believe that the euro will work in the long-term without a European central government.

So with all of these shining reasons against, why this push, this barreling, headlong drive toward centralization? According to a report in *The London Times* earlier this year, 78% of Britons know nothing to very little about the EU and its gigantic corporate and political structure that is assimilating Europe. Mass ignorance may lead to loss of sovereignty. We as Americans cannot control much of this, but we can turn a watchful eye to the forces of globalization overseas and observe carefully. It may turn out to be a dress rehearsal for things to come on other continents. ❧

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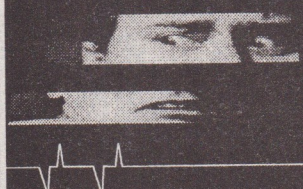


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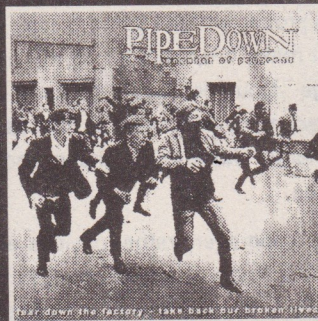
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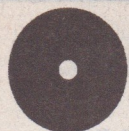
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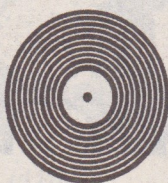
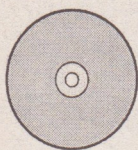
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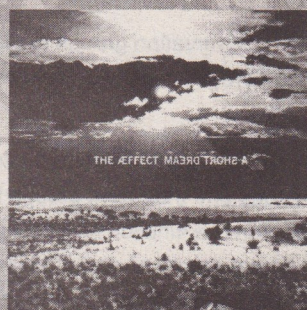
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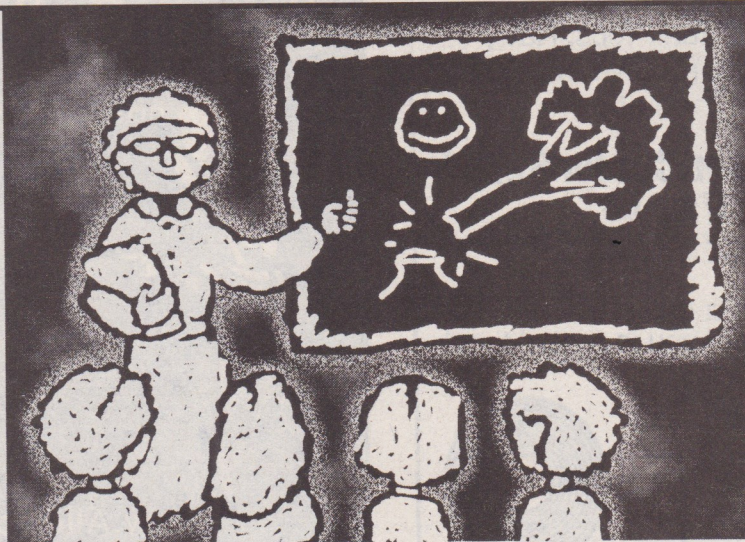
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Targeting Children: Industry's Campaign to Redefine Environmental Education



by John F. Borowski

art by Greg Rebis

Florida's Orange County Convention Center is big. Big enough to hold the Sears Tower, if you laid it on its side. So big you could walk ten miles and never leave the cement behemoth. Its electric bill is \$325,000 per month.

This hulking structure in Orlando seemed appropriate for the carnival-like setting of the National Science Teachers Convention, the largest gathering of educators in the nation: more than 14,000 science teachers and hundreds of exhibitors passing out armloads of pamphlets, packets, books, stickers, posters, and other educational goodies.

Though there were a handful of conservation groups at the event, those of us sitting at the Native Forest Council booth were clearly in the minority.

When I started teaching 20 years ago, I could never have imagined such a perverse display: industries and their front groups trying to justify everything from deforestation to extinction of species. Worse yet, they were targeting America's teachers and, ultimately, our children. Corporate America has dug its claws into one of the last refuges of commercial-free space left in our society: public schools. One of the pillars of our democracy, public education, is now for sale:

- The coal industry's Greening Earth Society passed out videos and teachers' guides to the "fallacies" of global warming that mocked environmental concerns.
- Weyerhaeuser boasted of the recovery of Mt. St. Helens, as if this somehow justified clear-cutting.

- The Temperate Forest Foundation offered a video titled "The Dynamic Forest." In this shrill presentation, insects and fire hurt forests, but industry provides the needed remedies—with the help of chain saws.

- The American Farm Bureau, avowed enemies of environmental education, propositioned teachers to reconsider the dangers of chemical biocides.

They were selling lies, and the teachers were buying—quickly filling their bags with curricula as corrosive as the pesticides that the Farm Bureau promotes. Where were the largest environmental groups to counter this frontal assault on environmental education? Where was the outcry of the educational community? Their deafening silence was tantamount to complicit resignation.

Selling Out Our Schools

Most people consider our public schools to be hallowed ground, where young Americans of various religions, races, and social strata collectively learn the tools of citizenship. Yet multinational corporations now view our children's schools as convenient locations for the dissemination of propaganda debunking environmental concerns, and as the tip of an unimaginably profitable marketing iceberg. The stakes are incredibly high.

Education about the environment is being assaulted on two fronts. First, multinational corporations are designing and distributing environmental curricula that is professionally produced, easy to use, often free and incredibly biased in favor of industry. Second,

some of the most prominent conservative think tanks in America are mounting a well-funded attack on genuine environmental education.

Their objective is simple: protect industries that despoil the planet and prevent any emergence of citizen awareness. The spectrum of curricula is breathtaking and its shamelessness is overt. The American Nuclear Society provides "Let's Color and Do Activities With the Atoms Family." Materials I received from Exxon portray the Prince William Sound cleanup as a victory of technology, brushing over the cause of the disaster: the Exxon Valdez. But the most brazen campaign of miseducation is carried out by the timber industry.

Big timber spends millions on its thinly veiled national PR campaigns, touting them as educational programs (which, of course, they generously donate to public schools). They offer hikes, presentations, and paid workshops for teachers. They distribute books, posters, videos, lesson plans, and other materials. Through the looking glass of big timber, old growth forests become decadent biological deserts that require clear-cutting in order to survive. Industry is not destroying the forests, the propaganda explains, it is "managing" them, acting as their stewards—even saviors.

A timber company in my own community offers a hike in a small section of their forest. Activity one in their educational pamphlet resonates strongly with the kids, and can shrewdly confuse the most earnest educator. The activity begins when the largest child in the group plays the big tree. The other children stand closely to the big tree and crowd it. The guide asks them to choose three words that describe how they, the little trees, feel when they are crowded together under the big tree. Then all the little trees scatter out, providing more space. The purpose of the exercise is to help

them visualize the benefits of thinning the forest. (For full realism, perhaps some of the children should be asked to visualize the feeling of being chopped down and processed into end tables.)

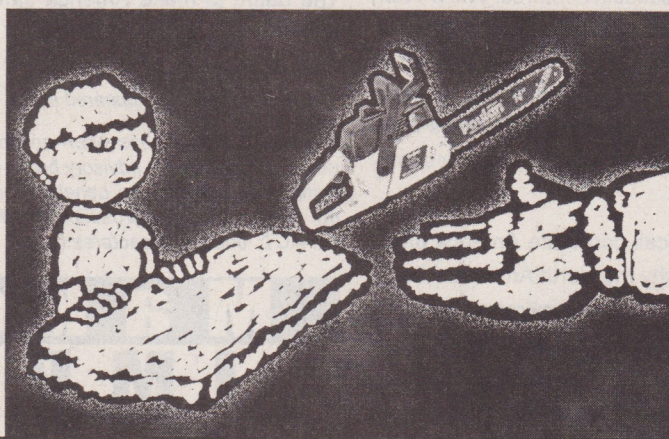
Project Learning Tree

Often, the very organizations that preach the gospel of environmental education are actually industry shills. They have earthy names but clandestine roots. The American Forest Foundation (AFF) has a list of co-sponsors, cooperators and partners that includes some of the most egregious despoilers of our forests: Sierra Pacific, friend of clear-cuts in California; Pacific Lumber, pillagers of the redwoods; MacMillan Bloedel; Willamette Industries; Boise Cascade. But the real story is found in one of AFF's core programs, called "Project Learning Tree" (PLT).

I first encountered PLT several summers ago when I was asked to lead a tour of teachers through Opal Creek, a wilderness area in the Willamette National Forest. Opal Creek is perhaps the most intact, pristine low-elevation watershed in the Pacific Northwest. Ironically, it has been preserved thanks to the efforts of the very activists that organizations like PLT oppose.

At the time that I agreed to lead the tour, however, I knew nothing about PLT. I arrived early at our meeting place by the clear waters of the Santiam River, with its giant trees providing the backdrop on this sun-drenched day. I felt honored by the opportunity to hike with teachers from across the globe and discuss the old-growth forest that I had defended in a presentation before a US Senate committee.

Kathy McGlaufflin, vice president of PLT, accompanied us on our sojourn. We walked two miles along some of Opal Creek's most



The Temperate Forest Foundation offered a video titled "The Dynamic Forest." In this shrill presentation, insects and fire hurt forests, but industry provides the needed remedies—with the help of chain saws.

spectacular riparian zones. Much to my surprise, McGlaulin spoke more like a timber booster than an environmental education expert. For every point I made about the destruction of national forests, McGlaulin revealed her true colors. It seemed inconceivable that the representative of a supposedly pro-forest organization could be so misinformed.

I explained that the native forests have been overcut and replanted, creating one-species tree farms instead of forest ecosystems. McGlaulin responded that this was my own personal opinion, not the reality. She mistakenly told the group that hemlock and cedars were replanted in large numbers after clear-cutting. Amazingly, she even claimed that apple orchards could be considered forest ecosystems.

I later found out the PLT is an industry front group, backed by timber dollars. The organization's website and printed materials look like something produced by an environmental group. PLT boasts a network of 3,000 grassroots volunteers and more than 100 state coordinators. This grassroots veneer is shrewd greenwash, and unfortunately, it is working.

Formed in 1970, PLT works to promote paper products, logging and industrial management of our nation's forests. They offer this version of "environmental education" to students from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade and claim to have reached more than 500,000 educators and 25 million students.

PLT's educational materials are damning enough. But, as the saying goes, if you want the truth, follow the money. The industries that bankroll PLT include some of the nation's most passionate clear-cutters.

Turning the Tide

Surreptitious public relations campaigns and deceptive advertising are battling today for the hearts and minds of our children. This battle will affect their health and their collective futures. Will we turn over public learning centers to those who see our children as pawns in the game of quarterly profits? Will we allow them to create a generation of apathetic and jaded young adults, disinterested in social issues and steeped in indoctrination that tells them corporate technology will save the day and that activism is for someone else?

The environmental community must call corporate America on its sham. I can't imagine, for example, why the North American Association of Environmental Education (the largest environmental education group in the world) has endorsed Project Learning Tree. We must refuse to ally ourselves with those who try to manipulate our children. Organizations that claim to speak for the environment must remove corporate polluters from their board of directors.

At a recent conference, an environmental education activist told me we need to be more "centrist" in our approach to solving problems. But I cannot take the middle of the road on this one. My children are not saleable property. Would good parents compromise on the welfare of their child? Industry is not "centrist," and

when environmentalists try to avoid conflict, we lose.

Parents must assume the role of front-line warriors in this winnable war. They must demand that any curricula provided by corporate sources be reviewed, just like the process by which textbooks are reviewed prior to adoption. They must challenge their local boards of education to keep their local schools free of commercial influences. They must ask their children to share the materials they receive at school. Corporate predators in education are no different than those who peddle tobacco to our children. They must bear the scorn of society and be stopped in their tracks.

Most importantly, we must highlight the wonders of true environmental education. Thousands of incredible teachers are working every day to enlighten their students. They need funding, and it is incumbent upon society to see that schools don't have to go begging to industry.

Teachers must begin to comprehend what I call the "teachable moment": that indelible instance when data and caring and insight all merge as one, representing all that is good about ecological sciences in public schools. This moment does not require a slick video, fancy equipment or corporate money with strings attached. All it takes is students and teachers, exploring the natural world together.

I have seen children connect to their natural world through discussing *A Sand County Almanac* in the classroom, hiking in the giant cedars of Opal Creek, and identifying invertebrates in our majestic tidal pools. This year alone, I have watched more than two dozen high school seniors choose environmental topics for their senior projects. Three students are examining the possible breaching of the Snake River dams, while another is painting a large mural on our school depicting the trees of Opal Creek.

Children care about the world and its beauty, which is our common heritage. They expect adults to lead, to represent their best interests, and to protect them from exploitative commercial influences. The battle to make America safe for childhood is a battle worth fighting. ❧

This article originally appeared in PR Watch and is printed with permission.

John F. Borowski has been an environmental science teacher for 20 years. He sits on the advisory board of the Native Forest Council, and has testified in Congress on behalf of forest protection. Feel free to contact the author at jenjill@proaxis.com. Please also send your comments to **IMPACT**: editor@impactpress.com

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Native Forest Council

<http://www.forestcouncil.org/>

North America Association of Environmental Education

<http://www.naaee.org/>

Protecting Children and Communities from Commercialism

<http://www.commercialalert.org>

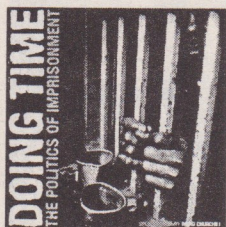
1. analysis

"We don't have to worry about whether we will have a political police either in the United States or Canada. We've had them for a long time ... It's not a question of how to prevent it, it's a question of how to deal with it since it is an existent reality." -- Ward Churchill, from the CD.

The U.S. government has used all means to subvert and neutralize movements for social change. This lecture focuses on the FBI's counter intelligence programs, their use in undermining dissent and the criminal justice system's role as an agent of social control.

Ward Churchill is co-director of the American Indian Movement of Colorado, Vice Chairperson of the American Anti-Defamation Council, and a National Spokesperson for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee.

WARD CHURCHILL
'DOING TIME:
THE POLITICS OF
IMPRISONMENT'
G7020 CD
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2. action

This album takes a passionate, inspirational speech from two OCAP anti-poverty activists (Sean Brandt & Sue Collis) and edits it into 11 spoken word pieces with radical beats & strings by "Bakunin's Bum" -- 1 Speed Bike (from *godspeed you black emperor! & exhaust*) and Norman Nawrocki (from *Rhythm Activism & Da Zoque!*). The result: a powerful, 69 minute mix of music & ideas about how to step up local resistance to the effects of globalized misery.

The words from the OCAP activists offer a fresh perspective on how to combat growing poverty in the face of abundance; about how to confront & challenge an insensitive, uncaring, police-dependent, State apparatus; and about how to work with others, in community organizations, using "direct action" approaches, uncompromisingly, to "fight to win".

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THE PLUS ONES

New to Asian Man Records are the Plus Ones. Hailing from the East Bay, this 4 piece power pop band have been rocking the bay area scene for the last few years. They have done one national tour with the Donnas and have an ep out on coldfront records. Coming to stores on August 14th are 3 new songs from the Plus Ones. This will be part of a split with the Travoltas. It is cleverly titled "GOING DUTCH"... You can mailorder it from Asian Man for \$5 bucks or go to your friendly neighborhood punk rock store and buy it there. It is now July 2001 and the band will begin working on their full length release due out early next year. So check the band out if you haven't before and get ready for the Plus Ones to start touring everywhere. <http://www.plusones.net>



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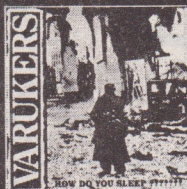
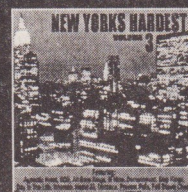
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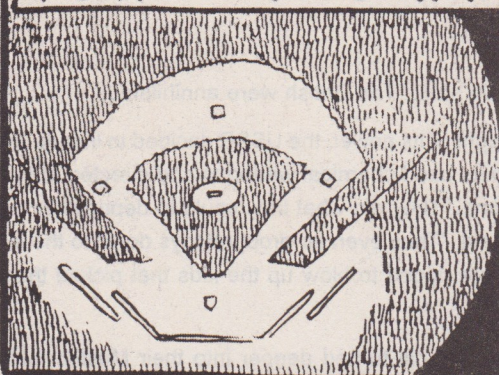
The new record from Long Islands skate punks which features songs about hockey, punk and beer. What more could you want.?



SICK ON THE BUS - Set Fire To Someone...

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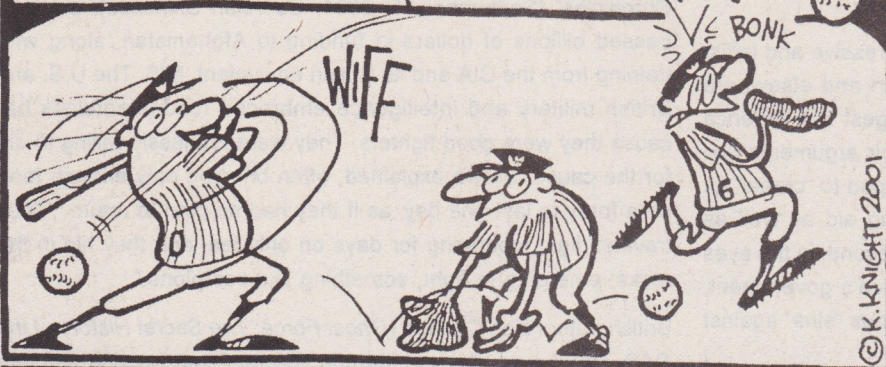


.. BUT IN COMMUNITY
SOFTBALL LEAGUES
ACROSS THE COUNTRY..

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS!!
THE
CHRONICLES

BY
KEITH
KNIGHT

POLICE DEPT. COMMUNITY SOFTBALL LEAGUES HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN FOR THEIR SLOPPINESS,
INEPTITUDE & TENDENCY TOWARDS FOUL PLAY...



SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE
TO "IMPROVE" THE PERFOR-
MANCE OF THE PLAYERS...

It is clearly evident that we
have to apply the same work
ethic to the game of softball
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decided to change
the color of the
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to black & brown!!



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MORE STOPS.

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CATCHES.

& THEIR SLUGGING
PERCENTAGE IS
WAY UP..

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THE LEAGUE HASN'T BEEN
ABLE TO "IMPROVE" ON...



IS THE PLAYERS' TENDENCY
TO GROW ON THE BATTING DONUT

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The Making of a Terrorist

Part One

by Morris Sullivan

In the wake of the September 11 tragedy, our government and the media have whipped Americans into a patriotic fever the likes of which have not been seen since the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Understandably, cable news stations almost exclusively report on the "war on terrorism" as it develops. In literally thousands of hours of electronic news coverage and thousands of pages of print devoted to the unfolding events, one news item has been largely overlooked in the popular media: Why did this happen?

The easy answer, and the one we've heard often since September 11, is that the terrorists are "evil." No rational American should suggest that the acts themselves were anything less than heinous or that the terrorists should not be brought to justice. However, to term them "evil" is a misleading over-simplification that will not help us answer the most pressing question: How do we respond?

A few details have begun to emerge in the progressive and leftist press, as well as web sites from Great Britain and elsewhere outside America. Reporters have begun to suggest that America should share responsibility for the attacks. Their arguments boil down to two main categories. First, the U.S. helped to "create" its prime suspect, Osama bin Laden, by providing aid as well as training for him and related terrorist networks. Second, in the eyes of the terrorists, as well as many others, America's government, military, and corporations have committed grievous "sins" against the rest of the world.

To understand how Osama Bin Laden came to be our "prime suspect," we must begin with Afghanistan. As pointed out by my friend and colleague, military historian Terence Brown, the Afghans are made up of "a whole series of clans bent on annihilating each other. They fight each other until someone else blunders in, then join together to fight off the intruder."

The Afghans have a centuries-old reputation as fierce warriors, and have successfully defeated more than one western conquest. For example, during the peak of its colonialism, the British sent a field force to Kabul. "The Afghans let one wounded guy escape to

tell the tale," Brown said. "The British were annihilated."

In 1979, at the height of its power, the USSR decided to invade the country. The Soviets used chemical weapons and directed atrocities against civilians. "They did what they could to depopulate the country," Brown said. "They even air-dropped toys down to the villages; the toys were rigged to blow up the kids that picked them up."

In response, the Afghans turned deeper into their Muslim faith, then "declared jihad and went at it." Afghanistan would eventually become the Soviets' Vietnam; the war, according to Brown, "weakened their system and eventually bled them dry."

The Afghans had help, however, from the United States and Britain, as well as from Islamic freedom fighters from outside the country. According to Giles Foden in the article "Blowback Chronicles" (September 15, 2001, *Guardian Unlimited*), the U.S. passed billions of dollars in funding to Afghanistan, along with training from the CIA and its British equivalent, MI6. The U.S. and British military and intelligence embraced fundamentalists because they were good fighters. They were fearlessly willing to die for the cause, Brown explained, often bringing only enough food on a foray to last one day, as if they had no plan to return. "They traveled light, operating for days on only tea, and they hid in the rocks, emerging to fight, something like scorpions."

British author Ken Connor, (*Ghost Force: The Secret History of the SAS, 1998*) even claimed that the CIA recruited freedom fighters from American Muslim communities for the fight in the Hindu Kush, training Afghans, Egyptians, Jordanians, and Arabs at "the Farm," a CIA spy training center in Virginia.

Among the freedom fighters was Osama bin Laden, the son of a Yemeni construction magnate who had become wealthy by undertaking road construction and other massive projects, often under contract with the Saudi Arabian government. Impressed with his Saudi credentials, sources have claimed, western military and intelligence enlisted, trained and supported Bin Laden, along with the Pakistan-sponsored Taliban, the faction with whom Bin Laden

Once the Bush administration was in office, we softened our policies toward the Taliban; critics suggested that the US trimmed its opposition to them in order to gain an advantage in oil politics.

ultimately aligned himself.

The Taliban was the most extreme Islamic fundamentalist group—and the most vehemently anti-communist group—opposing Soviet rule. After ousting the Soviets, the US supported their control of the country, resulting in the victimization of millions of Afghans by their own government.

Seumas Milne, ("They can't see why they are hated", September 13, 2001, *Guardian Unlimited*) pointed out that the Americans "poured resources into the 1980s war against the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul, at a time when girls could go to school and women to work. Bin Laden and his mujahedin [his followers] were armed and trained by the CIA and MI6, as Afghanistan was turned into a wasteland and its communist leader Najibullah left hanging from a Kabul lamp post with his genitals stuffed in his mouth."

The Taliban government has since become one of the most repressive in the world. For example, they announced their intention to force Afghanistan's non-Muslim residents to wear labels on their clothes identifying them as such, a move chilling in its similarity to the gold stars of David required by the Nazis. In a letter to President Bush, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky begs that the United States exercise its "responsibility as the world leader to speak up now and to demand an immediate end to this policy, before it's too late."

The Taliban has itself used terrorist-like attacks, even sending a suicide team to eliminate the leader of a rival faction, Ahmed Shah Massoud. On the day before the attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, a team posing as television journalists managed to assassinate Massoud by blowing him up with a bomb disguised as a camera.

The Clinton administration apparently had warnings that the Taliban was becoming a threat to the US and attempted to respond. Bin Laden, along with many Americans, no doubt, accused Clinton of using Afghanistan as a ploy to distract the American public from his sexual peccadilloes. Our media and Congress apparently believed the same thing; we might have forestalled or at least foreseen the current problem if we had paid attention to problems in Afghanistan rather than cataloguing each and every semen stain in the oval office.

Once the Bush administration was in office, we softened our policies toward the Taliban; critics such as Milne suggested that the US trimmed its opposition to them in order to gain an advantage in oil politics. Bush reportedly has close ties to Unocal, who, along with its partners BP and the Saudi royal family, want to put a pipeline across Afghanistan.

After Afghanistan came US involvement in Desert Storm, Kuwait, Bosnia, and Kosovo. "Generally, the places we've used military force in last quarter century is to defend Islam," Brown said. However, Bin Laden sees the US as anything but protectors of Islam. Once the Soviets were driven out of Afghanistan and the Taliban firmly entrenched, he returned home to Saudi Arabia, where he found American troops occupying Islam's most holy nations. To the fundamentalist, the US military bases established for Saudi

protection at the invitation of its government were no better than the Soviet invasion. Further, Bin Laden became angry at the Saudis—next to the Taliban, the most fundamentalist government in all Islam—for allowing the US presence. He since returned to Afghanistan to wage jihad against western Europe, the United States, and moderate Islamic nations.

Since his return to Afghanistan, the FBI believes bin Laden coordinated and funded the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, two bombings in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996 in which 24 American servicemen died, and the bombings of two American embassies in east Africa in 1998 that killed 224 people. He announced that he supported the attack on a US warship, the Cole, which was damaged by a suicide team piloting a small boat loaded with explosives.

In his first declaration of war against "Jews, Christians, and Americans," Bin Laden demonstrated his anger at the confrontation between Afghanistan's medieval Arabic culture and a 21st century superpower. No doubt, his anger and that of his supporters was fueled by American hedonism; Brown pointed out that the presence of female soldiers offended Muslim sensibilities, especially when scantily clad servicewomen were seen dancing on the desert sands. Compound that with his fury at the ongoing pro-Israel American involvement in the Palestine conflict: the "blowback" of our policies in Afghanistan resulted in the creation of a venomous adversary. ❧

In part two of this story, which will appear in the next issue, we will examine some of the other reasons behind Bin Laden's anger at the US, including the conflict between the golden-arches diplomacy of global capitalism vs. Islamic fundamentalism.

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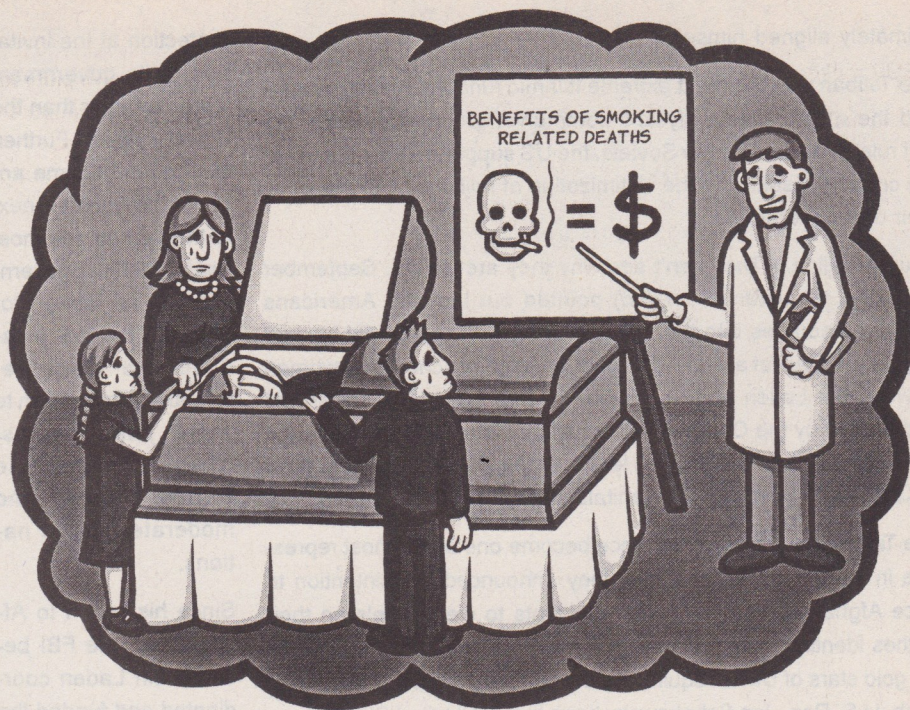
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Philip Morris Sees the Light

by Wayne Grytting
art by Eric Spittler



After decades of sticking their heads in the sand about the hazards of smoking, Philip Morris has found a new tactic — promoting the benefits to society of premature deaths from smoking. A study produced for them by Arthur D. Little, one of the “foremost management consulting firms,” found that the early deaths of smokers can have “positive effects” for society that will more than counteract the medical costs of treating smoking-related diseases such as cancer.

This path-breaking (ground-breaking) research was limited to smoking in Czechoslovakia. It found that in 1999, despite health care costs for dying smokers, the government still had a net gain of \$147.1 million from smoking. From these figures, the American Legacy Foundation calculated the Czech government saved \$1,227 per dead smoker. That’s a pretty good return, as Philip Morris proudly informed government leaders in the Czech Republic.

Philip Morris has since come in for a flood of criticism and has publicly apologized for the conclusions, which is too bad, because the report makes for fascinating reading. It is, as the researchers state, “the results of the exercise of our best professional judgement.” (Imagine what we’d get if they were having an off day).

What makes the study such a model of American scholarship is the care taken to leave no stones unturned. Not only did the Arthur D. Little researchers find out precisely how much early deaths save on health care expenses, housing for the elderly, social security and pensions (something we all wanted to know), they also uncovered savings from premature deaths in areas we non-experts would never dream to look.

Who would think to examine the effect of smoking deaths on unemployment? These researchers did, and they found that “replacing those who die early... leads to savings in social benefits paid to

the unemployed and in costs of re-training.” A wonderful gift to society.

But it gets even better. The researchers, with obvious relish, note that when a smoker dies prematurely, the savings to the state for that year “is only one part of the positive effect.” Look at all the other years the smoker would have lived had she or he not smoked, because, we are told, “the savings will therefore influence the public finance balance of smoking in future years(!)” It’s a gift that keeps on giving.

Lest you think that Philip Morris is alone in recognizing the benefits to society of early deaths, know that they are in good company. Four years ago, the state of Alabama arrived at similar conclusions in a report by their Attorney General that escaped public notice. This story was covered, as far as I know, only by the *Opelika-Auburn News*.

Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor found that “smoking-related health costs are not excessive, because smokers die young.” This breathtaking conclusion was the result of an 89-page report (with footnotes, I’m told). The Alabama study apparently was just the tip of the iceberg, because it pointed to even more studies that “show taxpayers actually save money in costs for nursing homes, insurance, pensions, and Social Security benefits because smokers die earlier than non-smokers.”

For those of you inclined to think that reasoning in Alabama takes its own course, know that State Farm Insurance followed the same line in a study defending Sports Utility Vehicles. Their researchers reported: “Sport utility vehicles may actually save insurers money in a few accidents, by killing people who might otherwise have survived with serious injuries. Severe injuries tend to produce larger settlements than deaths.” Sounds like public thanks are owed to

SUV makers, too.

Obviously, great minds work in the same circles.

It is unfortunate Philip Morris has had to suffer such bad publicity. The company, famous for its slogan "today's teenager is tomorrow's potential regular customer," has been working hard to spruce up its image. This past year it spent \$100 million on charity alone. Of course, it spent \$150 million telling people about their charitable giving, but this 3-to-2 ratio is actually quite good for an American corporation.

The Philip Morris report is no isolated travesty of reason. The language of the study, with all of its "objectivity," "quantification," "demographic data," and "statistical analysis," would be at home in any university or corporation. It bears the same brand of impersonal, machine-like reasoning. This is our culture speaking.

We can become so abstract and so disconnected that we cease to live on the planet. We all can. That's why I suggest the executives who brought us the Marlboro Man quit apologizing. Take your case to the people. Be aggressive. Reach out to the families of dying smokers. Get to know their names, their friends, their family sto-

ries. Then explain to them the "positive effects" of their approaching fates. Bring lots of charts. Lots. ☐

Wayne Gytting covers cutting edge advances in Orwellian Newspeak. His satirical writings can be found at www.americannewspeak.org. He lives in Seattle, Wa. He has been active in politics since the Sixties. He now teaches Special Ed. students.

Make an IMPACT

Don't forget, Philip Morris owns: Kraft, Miller Brewing, Maxwell House, Kool-Aid, Post Cereals, Shake 'N Bake, Cool Whip, Oscar Mayer, Fosters Beer and many more. Before you unknowingly support them, see what else they own:

<http://www.philipmorris.com/>

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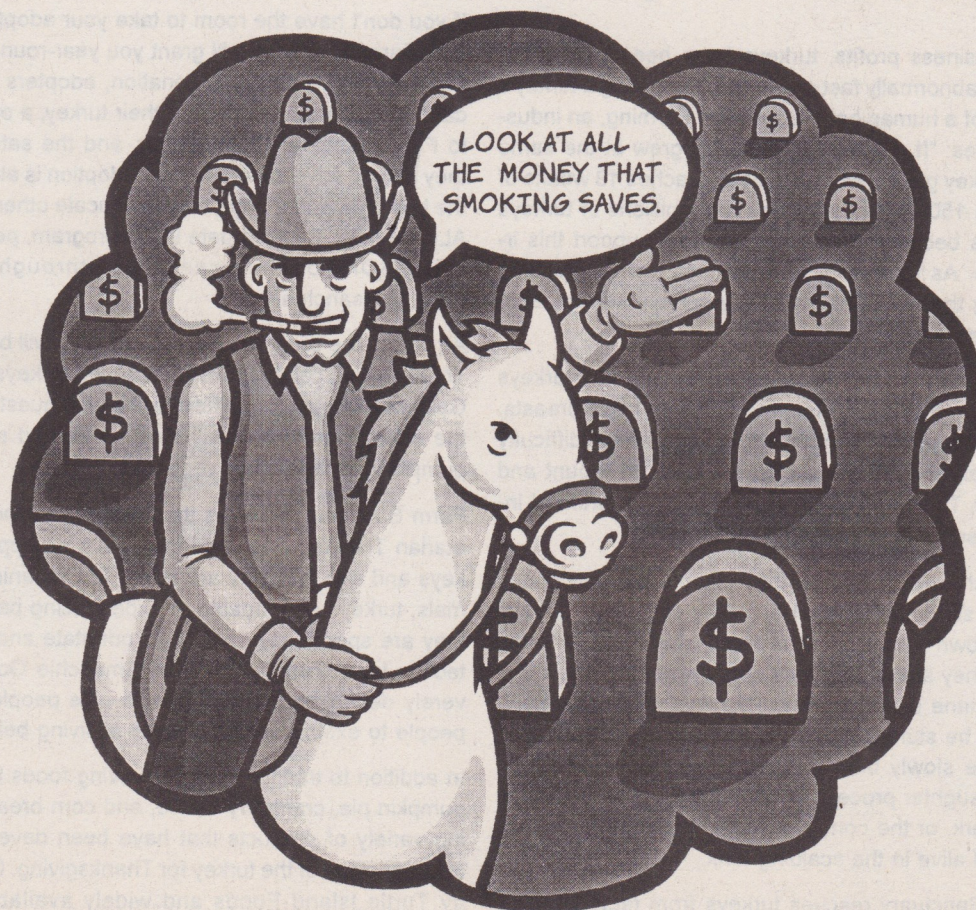
<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>

Infact: Challenging Corporate Abuse

<http://www.infact.org/>

Truth campaign

<http://www.thetruth.org/>



A New Thanksgiving Tradition That's Really For The Birds

This Thanksgiving, families across the country are participating in a new Thanksgiving tradition—they are saving an animal instead of serving one.

by Teresa D'Amico

Turkey No. 146-I, a snow-white bird with a breast as big as a basketball, has dropped to the bottom of his own pecking order. At about 30 pounds, he's too big for his spindly legs, which have collapsed. No. 146-I can no longer support the weight of his white meat. Now, he's the flock's target. Other turkeys have shredded No. 146-I's back and plucked feathers from his wings. Turkey No. 146-I will not make it to Thanksgiving. (Associated Press report 11/95).

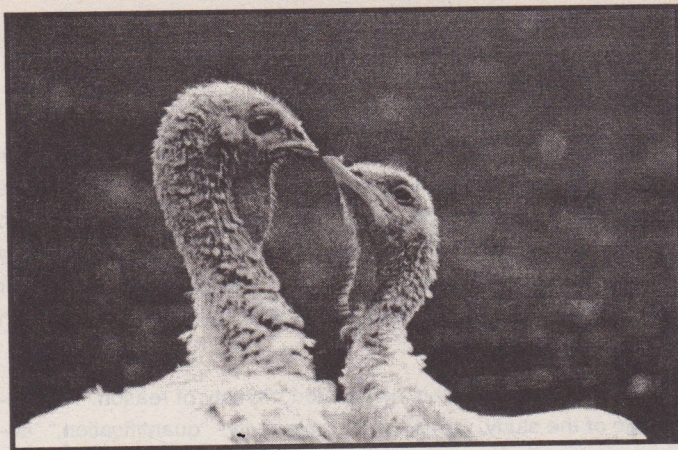
Every year, more than 300 million turkeys are bred for slaughter in the United States. The vast majority of these birds are crowded into "factory farm" confinement operations, where each turkey is given less than three square feet of space. Disease and suffering are rampant in these filthy and inhumane conditions. Stressed, agitated turkeys are driven to excessive pecking and fighting, and to avoid "economic losses" it is a common practice to cut off the birds' beaks and toe tips—both painful mutilations that are done without anesthesia.

To enhance agribusiness profits, turkeys have been genetically engineered to grow abnormally fast and large. Comparing a turkey's growth rate to that of a human baby, Lancaster Farming, an industry newspaper, states: "If a seven-pound baby grew at the same rate that today's turkey grows, when the baby reaches 18 weeks of age, it would weigh 1500 pounds." Every year, millions of turkeys die of heart attacks because their bodies cannot support this irregular growth rate. As turkeys grow, their legs have increasing difficulty supporting their inordinately heavy bodies. Millions succumb to crippling leg and joint disorders.

To meet consumer demand for breast meat, modern-day turkeys have also been altered to have disproportionately large breasts. This anatomical manipulation contributes to the turkeys' difficulty in standing and makes it impossible for the birds to mount and reproduce naturally. Turkey producers rely entirely on artificial insemination as the sole means of reproduction.

When turkeys reach market weight, they are packed into crates and trucked to the slaughterhouse. Here, fully conscious turkeys are hung upside down by their feet in metal shackles, suffering pain and terror as they are carried on a conveyor belt to the knife. Under federal "humane slaughter" laws, turkeys (and other poultry) do not have to be stunned during slaughter. As a result, millions of turkeys are slowly bled to death. Industry reports also indicate that the slaughter process is often inaccurate. When the knife misses its mark, or the conveyor belt is moving too quickly, the birds are boiled alive in the scalding tank.

Every year, Farm Sanctuary rescues turkeys from factory farms,



and slaughterhouses and provides them with life-long care at its shelters for farm animals. For the first time, people are seeing turkeys as living, sentient beings and learning that it is more humane and healthy to have a vegetarian Thanksgiving dinner, along with vegetarian dinners throughout the year.

Since 1986, Farm Sanctuary has held its annual Adopt-A-Turkey Project. This unique effort has directly saved hundreds of turkeys from the slaughterhouse, and encouraged millions of people to rethink their "traditional" Thanksgiving feast. This November, hundreds of families will help feed a turkey, instead of eating one, by adopting a feathered friend from Farm Sanctuary. Turkeys are very social and affectionate, and need families who can provide them lots of love and a safe, permanent home.

If you don't have the room to take your adopted friend home with you, Farm Sanctuary will grant you year-round visitation rights for the lucky bird. For a \$15 donation, adopters receive an adoption card and color photograph of their turkey, a one-year subscription to Farm Sanctuary's newsletter, and the satisfaction of knowing they helped save a life. A turkey adoption is also the perfect gift for the holidays, and a great way to educate other people to be kind to ALL animals. To participate in the program, people can call 1-888-SPONSOR, or they can adopt through our Web site at www.farmsanctuary.org.

As part of the program, Farm Sanctuary will be hosting vegetarian Thanksgiving celebrations for rescued turkeys at its New York and California farms. The turkeys will be the guests of honor instead of the main course, and will dine on stuffed squash, cranberries, pumpkin pie, and other vegetarian foods.

Farm Sanctuary believes that people will choose to have a vegetarian Thanksgiving once they have an opportunity to meet turkeys and see that they are living, feeling animals. Like other animals, turkeys are capable of experiencing pain and suffering, yet they are specifically excluded from state and federal animal protection laws. Turkeys such as Smoochie Goochie, who was severely debeaked but still likes to give people kisses, help teach people to extend compassion to all living beings.

In addition to traditional Thanksgiving foods like squash, stuffing, pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce, and corn bread, there are a growing variety of products that have been developed specifically to take the place of the turkey for Thanksgiving. One is Tofurky (made by Turtle Island Foods and widely available), and another is

Unturkey (made by Now and Zen). If you want to make something simple, you can stuff a squash instead of a turkey.

Thanksgiving is an ideal holiday to try a vegetarian meal because it basically means eating everything except the dead carcass. Just because we have done something for years does not mean that we must continue to do it in the future. Some traditions deserve to be ended, and eating turkeys is one of them. One way people have often rationalized that turkeys are unworthy of consideration is to call them dumb. To the contrary, they are sensitive, intelligent animals that are curious and good-natured. They make excellent companions who will sit on people's laps, and families who have adopted turkeys have commented that their turkeys will knock on the door with their beaks in order to be let in.

Through its Adopt-a-Turkey Project, Farm Sanctuary hopes to make Thanksgiving a happy holiday for ALL. ♡

Make an IMPACT

Farm Sanctuary

<http://www.farmsanctuary.org>

Turtle Island Foods -- Home of "Tofurkey"

<http://www.tofurkey.com>

Now and Zen -- Home of "Unturkey"

<http://www.unturkey.com>

More Vegan and Vegetarian recipes from VegSource

<http://www.vegsource.com/recipe/>



Rescued! The lovely Lydia was just one of the millions of turkeys raised each year for slaughter under cruel, crowded conditions, viewed as nothing more than a mere commodity. She is one of the lucky few, saved from a painful and premature end to her life, and now enjoys living at Farm Sanctuary's California shelter. Lydia has won the hearts of numerous visitors and sanctuary workers because she so loves to be hugged. We are always astounded by the capacity of animals such as Lydia who want to be near people after what they have been through. We are grateful to know Lydia, and to provide her with the peace and protection of permanent sanctuary.

Thankful VEGAN Recipes

ELEGANT BROCCOLI BISQUE

4 cups broccoli, chopped
2 cups water or vegetable broth
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
1 cup chopped onion
2 tsp. dried tarragon leaves
2 cups nondairy milk
2 Tbl. almond butter ~
1 Tbl. Dijon mustard
salt & black pepper to taste

Place the broccoli, water or broth, potatoes, onion, and tarragon in 4 ½-quart saucepan. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to medium. Cover saucepan with a lid, and simmer vegetables until tender, about 10 minutes. Process the soup in batches in a blender, adding a portion of the milk, almond butter, and mustard to each batch. Rinse out the saucepan and return blended mixture to it. Place saucepan over medium heat, and warm the soup, stirring often, until it is heated through. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes about 7 cups.

PUMPKIN PIE

Have Ready:

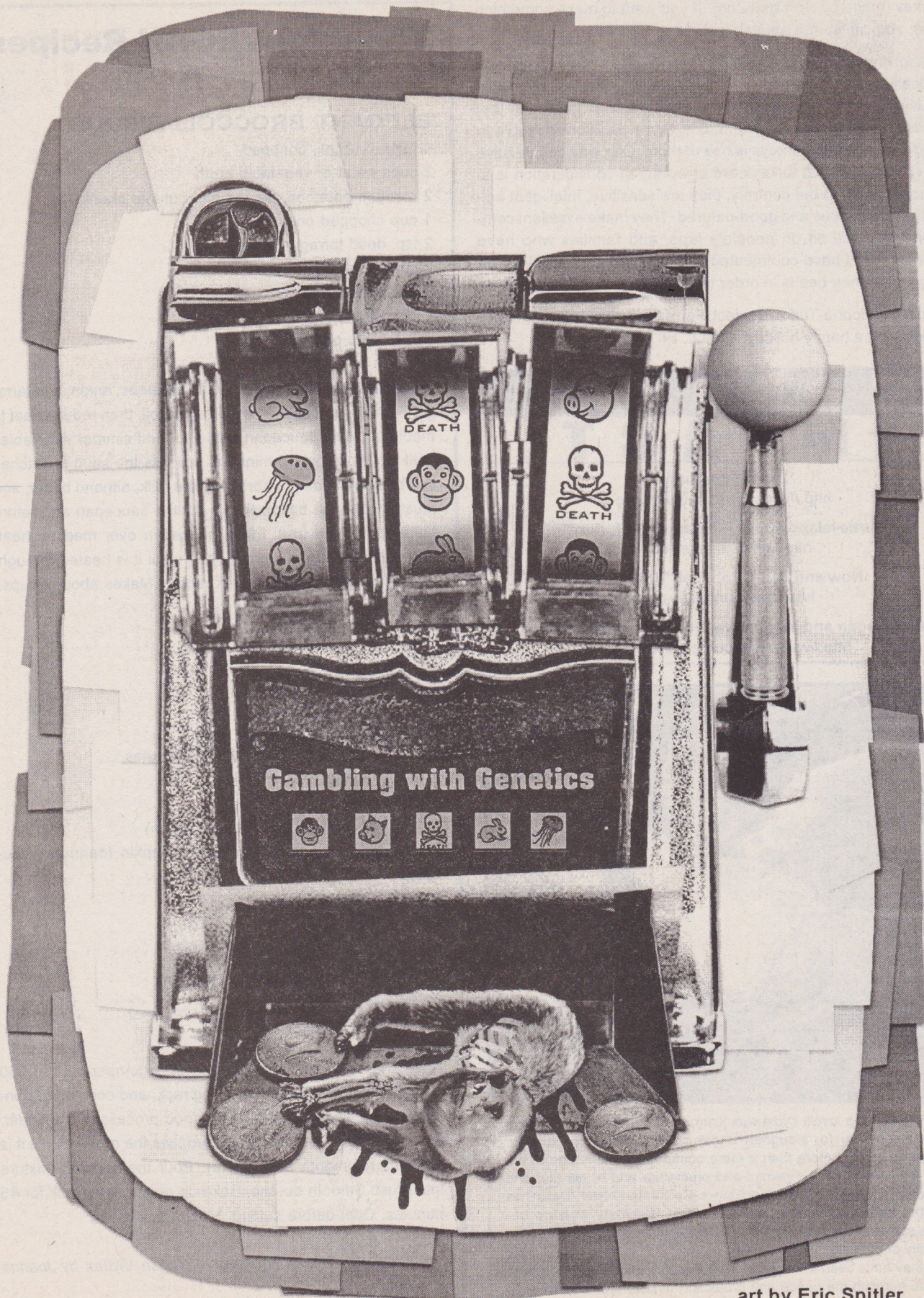
1 pie crust, prebaked for 10 to 12 minutes

Pie Filling:

1 10.5-ounce package silken tofu (firm)
1 ½ cups unsweetened cooked pumpkin (canned or pureed)
½ cup pure maple syrup
¼ cup cornstarch
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. ground ginger
1/8 tsp. ground cloves

After prebaking pie crust, reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Transfer crust to cooling rack, and cool for 10 minutes. Crumble tofu and place in food processor or blender. Add remaining ingredients and process the mixture until it is completely smooth and creamy. Pour the blended mixture into crust. Smooth out top. Bake on oven center rack for 45 minutes. Cool before cutting. Makes 8 servings.

*Thanksgiving recipes courtesy of **Vegan Vittles** by Joanne Stepaniak.*



art by Eric Spitler

THE MODERN - DAY iSLAnD OF DR. MOREAU

by Heather Moore

In 1996, the movie version of H.G. Wells' science-fiction classic *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, an eerie tale about a deranged scientist who performs gene-splicing research on animals in order to create a superior race of humans, was updated to incorporate more recent developments in genetic engineering. Wells' prophetic nightmare is edging closer to reality each day as scientists find new and bizarre ways to manipulate animals.

Virtually every species of domesticated animal has been tampered with as scientists attempt to create "new and improved" companion animals, research tools, and food sources. Non-allergic cats, glow-in-the-dark bunnies, mutant monkeys, silk-producing goats, giant mice, "Frankenfish," Enviropigs, and other transgenic (genetically altered) animals have made international news and raised the ire of many people who feel that it is unethical for scientists to play God with animals' lives.

Transgenic "Pets"

Nevertheless, in two years, Transgenic Pets, LLC, of Syracuse, N.Y., plans to sell cats who have been genetically engineered so that they won't trigger allergies in people. David and Jackie Avner, who formed the company two years ago, claim that conventional breeding has failed to rid cats of an allergen called "Fel d 1", which is secreted onto the cat's fur.

The Avners have contracted with Dr. Xiangzhong (Jerry) Yang, a biotechnologist at the University of Connecticut, to research and develop the allergy-free cat through a combination of "gene targeting" and cloning. The cat's skin cells would be altered to contain a faulty copy of the "Fel d 1" gene. The altered cells would then be fused with egg cells, as in cloning. If the resulting modified cats somehow turn out healthy—which is unlikely—they will be interbred and their offspring will be sold for \$750 to \$1,000 each.

Of course, the Fel d 1 protein may play a role in protecting cats from bacteria. Dr. Yang does not know what will happen if the protein is removed from cats. He says that they will "just have to remove it and see what happens." No previous attempts have been made to remove the allergen from cats, yet Mr. Avner claims that it will not affect the cat's health and that the cats will be "completely normal." This alteration amounts to "simply removing a non-essential biological aspect of the cats," according to Avner.

Avner chose not to mention that mortality rates for animals in transgenic research are very high—80 to 90 percent—and that animals who do survive are frequently born with severe physical abnormalities, including missing limbs, facial clefts, and massive brain defects. Genes are present in living organisms for reasons

not completely understood, and tinkering with them often causes animals physiological and immune system problems that researchers can neither anticipate nor control.

Regardless of the dangers posed by gene manipulation, animal shelters already euthanize 7 to 8 million homeless cats each year. There is no justification for "creating" new cats when so many others are being destroyed. There are simple, ethical, and effective ways to cope with allergies to cats and other animals. (See PETA's Web page on transgenic cats at <http://peta.org/feat/trans/index.html> for tips on dealing with allergies to animals.) If the Avners want a cat so badly and they cannot learn to cope with their allergies, perhaps they should work to identify and disarm those of their own genes that react to the allergen!

Designer Animals

The Avners certainly aren't the first to attempt to alter the genetic makeup of companion animals. Several companies are currently working to clone and "improve" companion animals. Philip Damiani, director of the Companion Animal and Endangered Species Project at Advanced Cell Technology, suggests that "if your first cat died of cancer, you might make the next one resistant to that kind of tumor." Charles Long of Texas-based Genetic Savings and Clone says that his company could help destroy the genes that cause hip malformations in some large breeds of dogs.

Noble thoughts, perhaps, but aside from the aforementioned hazards of breeding and manipulating animals, these experiments open the door to even more exotic and questionable modifications to animals' personalities and appearances. Although he does not feel that there would be a huge demand for one, Long says he is "pretty sure we could make a blue dog."

Transgenic "artist" Eduardo Kac wanted to exhibit a glow-in-the-dark dog, but since that technology was not yet possible, he commissioned scientist Louis-Marie Hodebine and others at the National Institute of Agronomic Research in France to create a fluorescent green bunny, named Alba.

Alba was "born" in February 2000, as a result of a process called zygote microinjection. The experimenters extracted a fluorescent protein from a jellyfish and enhanced its glowing properties two-fold. The enhanced gene was then inserted into a fertilized rabbit egg cell that eventually became Alba.

Kac had intended to take custody of Alba, but because of growing concerns for her welfare and the potentially devastating effect the bunny would have on the ecosystem if she were to escape and reproduce, she was not released to Kac.

An assistant professor of art and technology in Chicago, Kac contends that transgenic art is "important because it places genetic engineering in a social context in which the relationship between

the private and the public spheres are negotiated. In other words, biotechnology, the private realm of family life, and the social domain of public opinion are discussed in relation to one another." To put it simply, he thought it would be really cool to have an animal that glows in the dark.

Helping or Hurting?

Alba is not the only phosphorescent creation worthy of a Mary Shelley novel. Jellyfish genes have been inserted into other animals for use in torturous laboratory experiments. In 1997, Tokyo experimenters added the glowing genes to mice who were used as models for studying diseases. The Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, recently implanted jellyfish genes in at least 14 rhesus macaque monkey fetuses, and the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center (ORPRC) made headlines for "creating" ANDi ("inserted DNA" abbreviated backwards). ANDi is the sole survivor of 40 embryos (also inserted with jellyfish genes) that were implanted in rhesus monkeys

Why this fascination with jellyfish genes? Why not just insert the genes that cause disease and get on with the business of curing disease, which the experimenters claim is their goal? According to experts, most viruses and disease-causing genes are too large to insert into monkeys'—or our own—genes or are inactivated by ORPRC's methods, so finding cures to diseases seems highly improbable. Even Dr. Rudolph Jaenisch, creator of the first transgenic mouse, believes that "it is very unlikely from all we presently know about diseases that there will be any breakthrough with this creation of ANDi."

Perhaps even more disturbing is that the ORPRC receives funding from the well-known birth defect charity March of Dimes. Most contributors to the March of Dimes are completely unaware that their donations are given to scientists at facilities that waste precious research dollars and animals' lives by genetically engineering animals.

Genetically modified animals commonly suffer and die as scientists make futile attempts to cure human diseases using animal models. For example, Harvard University's patented "oncomouse," a mouse with an inserted human cancer gene, quickly develops fatal breast cancer. Similarly, genetically altered "cystic fibrosis mice" commonly die within 40 days.

Such terrible suffering is completely needless. Enormous variations exist among species, and meaningful scientific conclusions cannot be drawn about one species by studying another. In the case of the "cystic fibrosis mice," the animals do become ill, yet their lungs do not become infected or blocked with mucus as they do in human patients. Therefore, the findings from the study are irrelevant to humans.

Countless other animals are subjected to harmful genetic modifications for transplant purposes. Yet xenotransplants, in which the organ of one species is transplanted into another, always fail because the differences between people and animals are so great. It is simply not possible to predict or quantify the risk of xenotransplants for both animals and humans. Many people also fear that these transplants will result in the emergence of new, deadly human diseases.

Regardless, Cambridge, England-based Imutran, the world leader in xenotransplantation, has been breeding pigs with a human gene in an attempt to create animal organs that will not be easily rejected during human transplant operations. A *Daily Express* exposé of Imutran reported that the company caused horrible suffering when transplanting the modified pigs' hearts and kidneys into monkeys. According to witnesses, the animals were huddled together, shivering, and having spasms. Some had swell-

ings or bruises; some had blood or pus seeping from their wounds.

Others vomited or suffered from diarrhea. Many of the primates died during the operation because of "technical failures."

Others died from organ failure just days later.

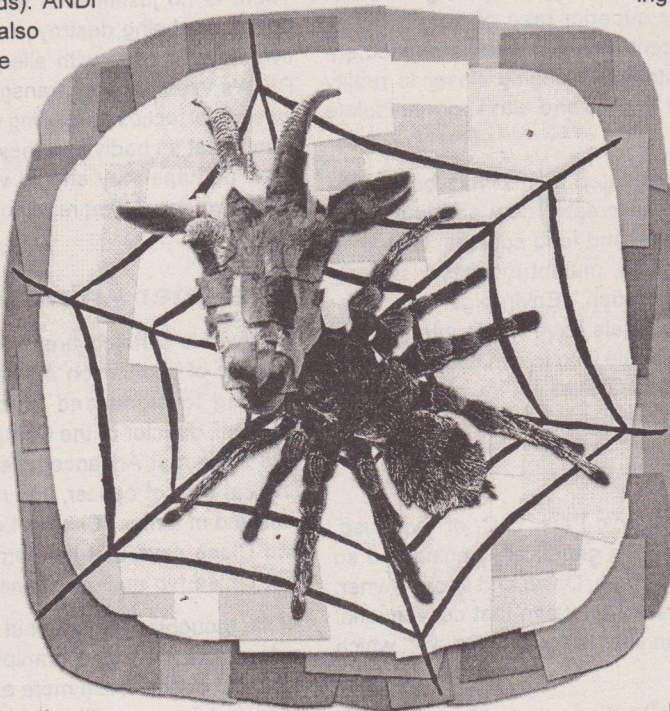
Researchers at another British firm, PPL Therapeutics, are equally eager to clone pigs with genetically altered organs for use in xenotransplants. PPL Therapeutics, the same firm that cloned Dolly, committed a serious ethical infringement by inserting the DNA of a Danish woman into thousands of New Zealand sheep without her knowledge or consent. The company hopes to make a profit from this action by

extracting a protein, which it claims might

help cure diseases such as cystic fibrosis, from the modified sheep's milk.

Nexia Biotechnologies, one of Canada's most prominent animal transgenic companies, believes it is "on the verge" of producing goats that will secrete spiders' silk in their milk. Nexia scientists expect the offspring from two male transgenic goats and a herd of unmodified females to produce milk containing the spider silk protein, which Nexia plans to use to manufacture a material lighter and stronger than steel. Nexia will supposedly use the material for aircraft, racing vehicles, bulletproof clothes, sutures, and artificial tendons, ligaments, and limbs.

However, experiments on genetically altered animals will not be any more useful or relevant than experiments on nongenetically engineered animals. All animal experiments are a cruel and dangerous waste of time, and despite the self-professed good they claim to be doing, it seems that some scientists simply have a need to control things that do not need to be controlled.



Super-Sized Animals

Ethics aside, numerous studies have proven that people should forget about the leaner, genetically altered slab of beef and switch to plant-based diets for health reasons. Animal products are known to cause heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, strokes, obesity, cancer, diabetes, and a myriad of other health problems. They also contain dangerous antibiotics and unnatural chemicals. Yet, instead of advocating vegetarianism, some scientists are trying to create animals that produce double the normal meat yield.

After Se-Jin Lee, a professor of genetics at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, discovered a gene that regulates muscle growth and accidentally produced a family of giant mice, the University set up MetaMorphix, a company that would attempt to develop giant lobsters, chickens, pigs, sheep, and cattle by blocking the genes that limit the animals' natural growth.

MetaMorphix believes that it can accelerate growth rates in certain species by about 12 percent and create adult animals who are up to 50 percent larger and have a much higher proportion of muscle than nature intended.

The gene-blocking procedure is being widely used to create super-size fish, deemed "Frankenfish" by opponents of genetic manipulation. For example, Cape Aquaculture Technologies (CAT) in Massachusetts is working to create giant fish and shellfish; Rex Dunham, a researcher at Auburn University, is currently seeking federal approval to sell engineered catfish that grow 60 percent faster than normal; and Canadian-based Af Protein has created a transgenic salmon that grows far faster and larger than regular salmon.

But genetically altering animals to grow larger and more rapidly is nonsensical considering that humans are perfectly healthy, and far better off, without meat and dairy products. It's even more absurd to engineer cows to produce more milk when there is already a surplus of milk in the United States and Europe. But that hasn't stopped Monsanto, a chemical firm, from using BST (bovine somatotropin) to induce cows into producing excess milk. The hormone, commonly known as Bovine Growth Hormone or BGH, puts cows at increased risk for painful udder infections known as clinical mastitis and increases the likelihood that the milk will contain pus and dangerous antibiotics. Monsanto is simply increasing the dangers of an already-unhealthy product.

Sixteen years ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that it had created the world's first transgenic livestock animal. The result horrified the public—sickly, mutant pigs crippled by gastric ulcers, arthritis, and other illnesses. Undeterred, experimenters are continuing to fiddle with pigs until they mutate them into practically different beings. The Georgia biotech company ProLinia, Inc., has already drawn up a business plan for cloning and engineering livestock. ProLinia wants to sell pigs that will produce leaner bacon and meatier pork chops. Smithfield Foods, one of the world's largest pork producers, has already invested \$1 million in ProLinia's plan.

Still other pork producers, concerned over the public backlash in response to the appalling pollution and waste-runoff from hog farms, have even attempted to create an "Envirpиг," a genetically altered pig who supposedly produces more environmentally friendly manure. To create the Envirpиг, biotechnologists spliced mice genes and E. coli bacteria, into pig genes. According to the biotechnologists, this will reduce the amount of phosphorus in pig waste.

Maybe, but phosphorus isn't the only pollutant produced by hog farms. And the stench and waste generated by hundreds of thousands of terrified pigs is not going to go away that easily. Besides, even if the "Envirpиг" reduced the dangerous waste runoff from factory farms, the development of the animal would only result in widespread animal cruelty and human health problems.

Tainted pork, from pigs genetically engineered to develop a disorder similar to diabetic blindness in humans, was unknowingly eaten after the pigs were stolen from the University of Florida. The meat was ground up, made into sausage and served at a funeral—an appropriate place considering that pork from both altered and unaltered pigs can be deadly.

University officials do not know what effect, if any, the treated meat could have on people who eat it. The effect of eating "regular" pork, however, is widely known. Pork consumption can lead to heart attacks, strokes, high cholesterol, obesity, and high blood pressure. The cramped conditions on hog farms also foster diseases such as dysentery, cholera, trichinosis, and toxoplasmosis. The day that any pork product is "safe" will be the day that pigs fly.

Unnecessary Fuss

Unfortunately, the genetic alterations have only just begun. The aforementioned animals are just the tip of the iceberg—countless other animals are being mutated and "reinvented" behind closed laboratory doors all around the world. Truly progressive, modern scientists advocate vegetarianism and alternatives to animal-testing, but Frankenscientists simply fail to realize that people are much better off without the use of animals—whether genetically engineered or not.

And where will it all end? Will scientists next attempt to create dogs that can fix cars, monkeys that exhibit specific diseases at the push of a button, and pigs that grow chicken wings and do not make waste? At the moment, there is little to stop them. Laws regulating genetic engineering and animal welfare are minimal and filled with loopholes. It's up to the public to inform these experimenters that it's simply not nice to fool with Mother Nature. ❧

Heather Moore is a staff writer for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

Make an IMPACT

PETA Campaigns

Peta-Online.org • HelpTheMonkeys.com
MarchOfCrimes.com • GoVeg.com • FishingHurts.com

Organic Consumers Association

<http://www.purefood.org/>

Bioengineering Action Network of North America (BAN)

<http://www.tao.ca/~ban/>

Campaign for Responsible Transplantation (CRT)

<http://www.crt-online.org/>

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)

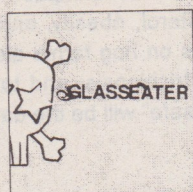
<http://www.pcrm.org/>

Bigwig

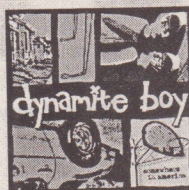
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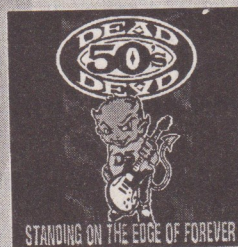


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March of Dimes

HELPING or HURTING?

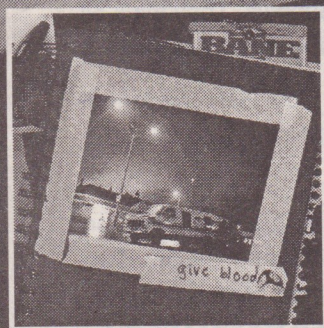
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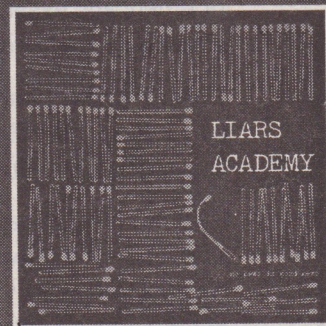


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Evolution Without God

by Gary Sloan

art by Greg Rebis



According to a 1997 Gallup poll, only 10% of Americans believe that life originated and evolved through naturalistic processes unmediated by supernatural force or intelligence, the view (sometimes called nontheistic evolution) held by most evolutionary scientists. About 45% of Americans favor theistic evolution, a.k.a. intelligent-design theory (IDT). While they believe species evolve from antecedent species, they think God guides the process and created the first living cell. The remaining 45% or so of Americans essentially embrace the miraculous account(s) of creation in Genesis. They think all animals descend from the fully formed prototypes God created fewer than ten thousand years ago.

Only 7% of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom accept the biblical scenario. Obviously, the American educational establishment and enlightened members of the media have their work cut out. The voices of obscurantism are drowning out the voices of reason.

Recently, in Louisiana, my home state, a large newspaper solicited letters and guest columns on evolution. Of the twenty-seven published responses, only one, mine, plumped for nontheism. Two biology professors defended intelligent design as did a physician and two lawyers. Sixteen respondents, some resorting to labyrinthine exegeses, championed various renditions of the Genesis myth.

Given the rampant ignorance of the case for nontheistic evolution, perhaps a new brief is in order.

To begin with, the evidence for Darwinian evolution is so far-ranging and compelling that no impartial observer, surveying the vast accumulation of data, can reasonably deny it. Evidence from the fossil record, comparative anatomy, embryology, biochemistry, molecular biology, and cell biology all converges at a single point: Life began about 3.5 billion years ago with single-celled organisms (prokaryotes), and gradually, during this almost unimaginably vast expanse of time, evolved forms of increasing complexity. While many wrinkles have yet to be ironed out, the general contours of the process are unmistakable.

Creationists routinely lodge three specious objections to evolution.

Evolution, they say, violates the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which holds that, as systems lose energy, they degrade to states of increasing disorder. They exhibit entropy. Evolution moves in the other direction, from disorder to order, gaining instead of losing energy. Here, the anti-evolutionists leave their flank exposed: The Second Law applies only to isolated systems, ones in which energy from the outside cannot enter nor energy from within exit like the universe as a whole. The earth is *not* an isolated system. It enjoys a constant influx of energy from the sun. The sun's loss is the earth's gain.

Complex organs like eyes and wings, the creationists further object, had to spring into existence complete, rather than develop from rudimentary precursors, because a partial organ is without utility.

This argument is astonishingly unobservant. Half an organ, nay, one-hundredth of an organ, is better than no organ. While cataract sufferers who have had their lenses surgically removed can't see well without glasses, they are considerably better off than the sightless. Although an animal without lenses can't focus an image, it can detect the looming shadow of a predator and take evasive action. While animals without wings can't fly, some can glide. Between their joints they have flaps of skin, fractional wings, that have survival value. If they fall from a tree at a certain crucial height, the flaps offer air resistance that can mean the difference between life and death. In *The Blind Watchmaker* and *Climbing Mount Improbable*, famed evolutionist Richard Dawkins treats the subject at length. Over an eon, minute, incremental modifications can dramatically change the appearance and function of an organ. But, at every stage, the evolving organ has functional value.

Creationists also contend that evolutionary change occurs only within species ("threshold" evolution). The fossil record, they claim, provides no evidence of speciation, the transformation of one species into another.

In truth, many transitional forms exist. But, owing to zoologists' conservative nomenclature, the fact is often blurred. When zoologists discover a specimen intermediate between two known species, they typically classify it as one or the other. Because of this either-or naming practice, what is nominally one species can be a finely graded series of disparate organisms. In Dawkins' words, "No 'missing link', however precisely intermediate it was, could escape the terminological *force majeure* that would thrust it to one side of the divide or the other."

In *Climbing Mount Improbable*, Dawkins observes that the most famous "missing link" isn't necessarily missing: "The transition from *Australopithecus* to *Homo habilis* to *Homo erectus* to archaic *Homo sapiens* to modern *Homo sapiens* is so smoothly gradual that fossil experts are continually squabbling about how to classify particular fossils." "Smoothly gradual" is the operative phrase. No indisputable gap exists. The right way to look for intermediates, says Dawkins, is "to forget the naming of fossils and look, instead, at their actual shape and size." One then sees that "the fossil record abounds in beautifully gradual transitions."

True gaps in the fossil record exist because many species failed to fossilize. Others fossilized but haven't yet been found.

Nontheistic evolutionists agree with intelligent-design theorists and creationists that the odds of life developing from non-life seem, on the basis of current knowledge, minuscule. True, in some laboratory experiments, when heat is applied to various mixtures of elements thought to simulate conditions on earth four billion years ago, a small number of organic molecules are formed. But nowhere near the number needed, say many biologists, to make a primitive cell.

Because of the seeming improbability of life, proponents of design maintain that the transition from non-life to life required divine intervention. "The finger of God," said the late chemist Brian Silver in *The Ascent of Science*, "is certainly a tempting way out." Silver resisted the temptation. He says the emergence of a living cell may be less miraculous than it now appears. Perhaps matter has an undiscovered self-organizing principle that conduces to life. Or perhaps scientists are making the wrong assumptions about conditions on the pre-biotic earth. Events that happened over four billion years ago are recalcitrant to reconstructive efforts. Life's so-called "irreducible complexity" may be an illusion wrought by a transient paucity of knowledge.

In any case, statistical improbabilities are notoriously deceptive. In retrospect, most events can be viewed as massively improbable. What are the chances your father would impregnate your mother

Because of the seeming improbability of life, proponents of design maintain that the transition from non-life to life required divine intervention. "The finger of God," said the late chemist Brian Silver in *The Ascent of Science*, "is certainly a tempting way out."

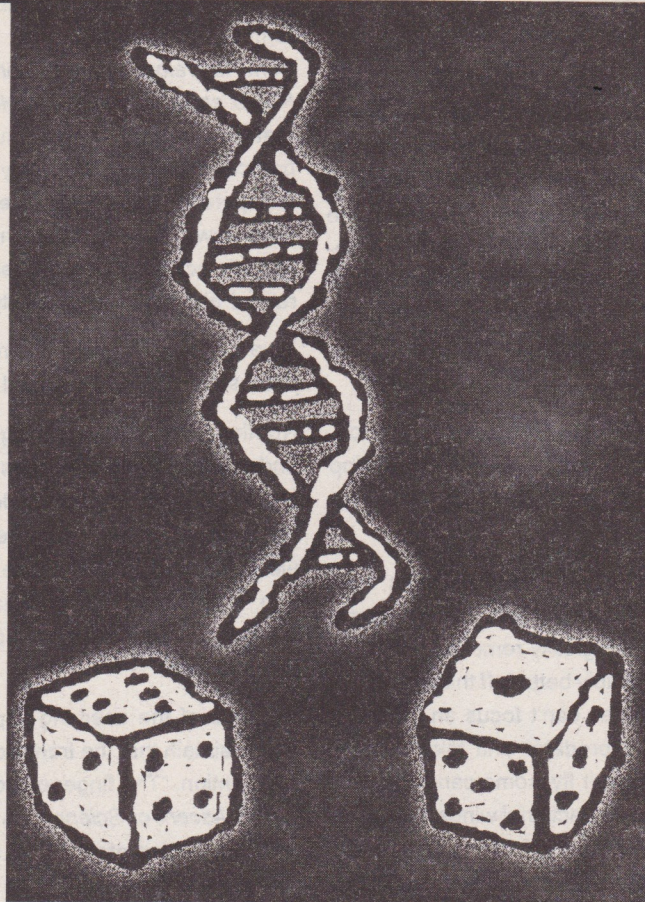
If everybody in the world flipped coins for the rest of their lives, they would have to live about a billion years before anyone replicated your sequence of 150 tosses. They might allege you couldn't have done it without supernatural aid. One can't logically argue that because something highly improbable happens, some occult force had to make it happen that way.

with the particular sperm from which you are derived? Zillions to one. Toss a coin thirty times and record the sequence of heads and tails. Now, toss the coin another thirty times. The chances of your duplicating the first sequence are one in a billion. Do 150 tosses and the odds of duplicating the sequence are 10 to the 45th power (1 followed by 45 zeroes). If everybody in the world flipped coins for the rest of their lives, they would have to live about a billion years before anyone replicated your sequence of 150 tosses. They might allege you couldn't have done it without supernatural aid.

One can't logically argue that because something highly improbable happens, some occult force had to make it happen that way.

Whatever their pretensions to objectivity, design theorists, like biblical creationists, are usually impelled by religious motives.

Why they should find the concept of a Designer comforting, rather than unsettling, is perhaps best explained by psychologists. If a Designer exists, "he" can certainly be intelligent, but, according to human standards of morality, it is an intelligence often directed to ill. Nature is a huge killing field rocked by ceaseless internecine combat. Living creatures spend much of their time ripping other creatures apart or trying to avoid being ripped. Billions of people have died agonizing deaths from genetic flaws subtly shrouded in the innermost recesses of their DNA molecules. The list of ailments that afflict humans and other animals is longer than an anaconda. No human imagination is capacious enough to grasp the quantity of excruciating pain that animals have endured, generation after generation, throughout what Shakespeare called the dark and backward abyss of time. It seems positively callous and



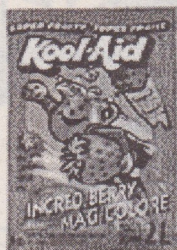
irreverent to worship any Being who would wittingly concoct a universal torture chamber.

If, as some design theorists allege, the purpose of evolution is to produce us, why the long prologue? Why not bring us onto the stage immediately, an easy feat for Omnipotence, and forego all the preliminary sound and fury? And why not provide incontrovertible evidence of a teleological scheme (i.e., design)? Why make it reasonable for evolutionary scientists to explain the origin and development of life by appealing strictly to naturalistic mechanisms? Why should God reduce himself to an unnecessary hypothesis?

The concept of design raises more questions than it answers. Candid theists are likely to concede that given four billion years and unlimited power, they could do better than their putative Designer.

In the light of current knowledge, the genesis of life on earth does indeed seem remarkable. But the inferences drawn therefrom shouldn't reach beyond the facts. As Nobel-laureate physicist Steven Weinberg noted, "In a big universe, accidents will happen from time to time." ❖

Gary Sloan retired in 1999 from Louisiana Tech University, where he was George Anding Professor of English. He lives in Ruston, Louisiana. Besides many articles in academic journals, he has written essays on science, religion, and literature for many popular publications, including *Free Inquiry*, *Skeptic*, *American Atheist*, *The Humanist*, *The American Rationalist*, and *Exquisite Corpse*. His article *Did Jesus Exist, and Does It Matter?* appeared in the Dec. 00/Jan. 01 issue of *Impact*.



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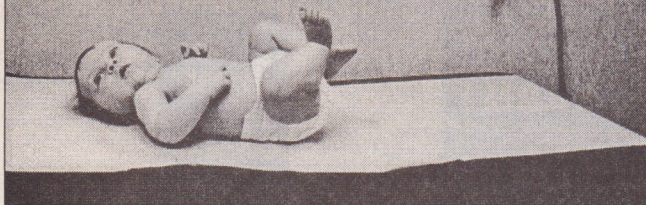
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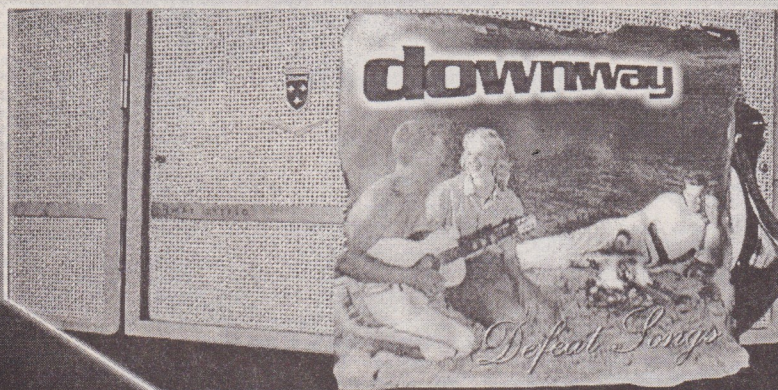


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Stephanie McMillan

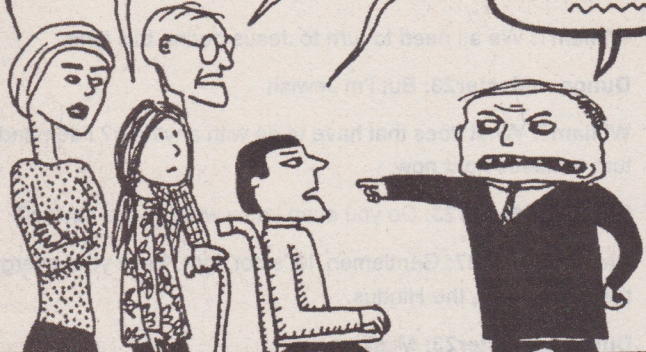
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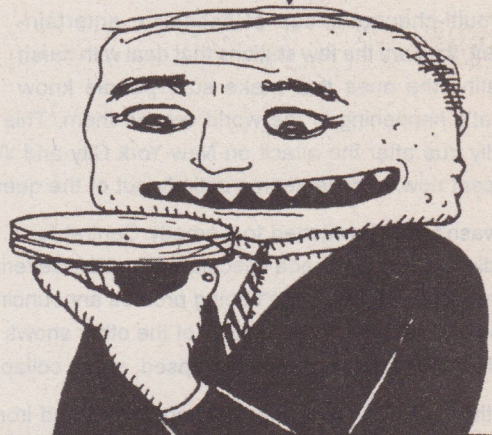
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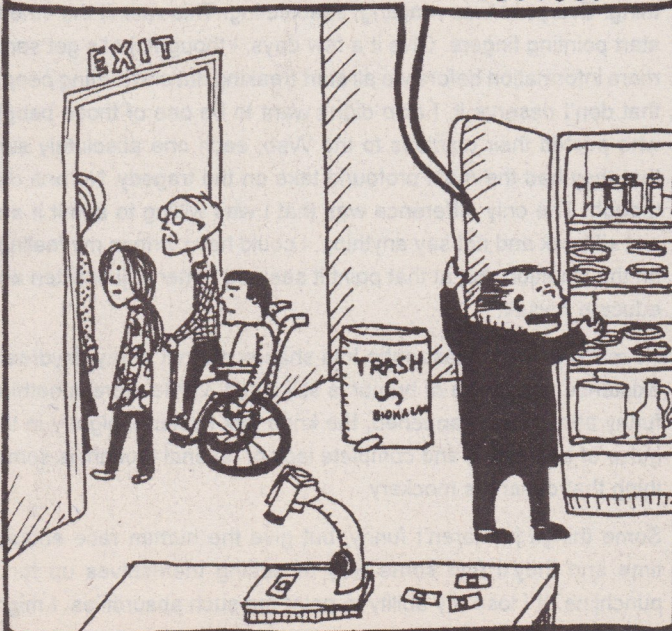


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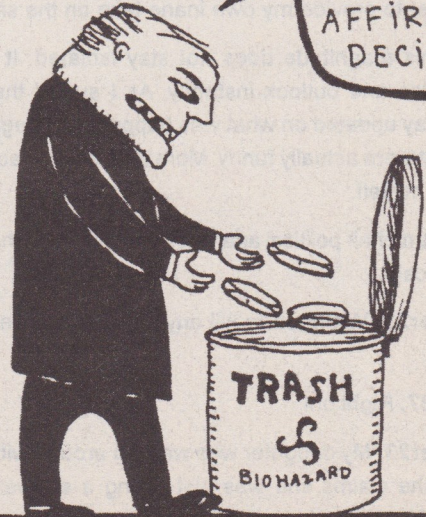


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AT LEAST I MADE THE LIFE-AFFIRMING DECISION.



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Did satire have to die, too?

By Adam Finley

Today is September 14th, and Comedy Central is still showing reruns of The Daily Show. There should have been a new episode by now.

When tragedy occurs, one expects CNN, MSNBC, FoxNews and the other major networks to interrupt programming and keep us informed. Within a multi-channel lineup of escapism entertainment, they are the few stations that deal with harsh reality; the ones that make sure people know what's happening in the world around them. This became especially true after the attack on New York City and Washington DC. Except now, escape seems entirely out of the question.

It wasn't until I switched to Comedy Central for a break from the endless video feeds and speculation that the severity of it finally hit home. Jon Stewart wasn't doing promos announcing what was up next on The Daily Show, and all of the other shows were reruns as well. When the two towers collapsed, satire collapsed with it.

At that point I wanted that skewered view and ironic detachment more than anything. Not because I thought what happened was funny, but because it's how I deal with grief. I was left with no way to react.

Before September 11th, my entire worldview was based on detachment. There was never a cause, religion, or political ideology that I was behind one hundred percent. As wishy-washy as this may seem, it's probably the biggest reason I tend to write satire more than anything else. I can easily remove myself from just about anything in order to provide my own inane take on the situation.

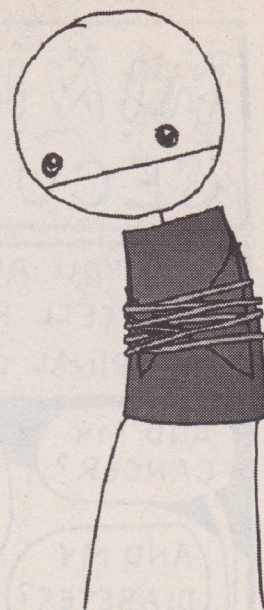
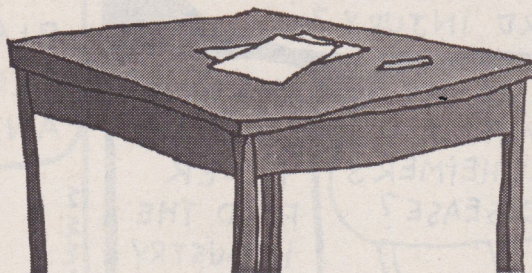
A tragedy of this magnitude does not stay isolated. It changes peoples' attitudes and outlook instantly. As I surfed the various news sites to stay updated on what was happening, I began to see a few things that were actually funny. More than once, I laughed out loud in spite of myself.

The number of armchair political analysts spouting off on the Internet was astronomical:

DungeonMaster23: We need to kill anyone with a towel on their head.

BlenderLady587: Right on!

DungeonMaster23: My daughter was walking around with a towel on her head. She claims she was just taking a shower, but I'm keeping her locked in the basement just to be safe.



art by explodingdog.com

WilliamT: We all need to turn to Jesus during this time.

DungeonMaster23: But I'm Jewish.

WilliamT: What does that have to do with anything? I demand you turn to Jesus right now.

DungeonMaster23: Do you even know what you're saying?

BlenderLady587: Gentlemen, let's not fight. Save your energy for the real enemy, the Hindus.

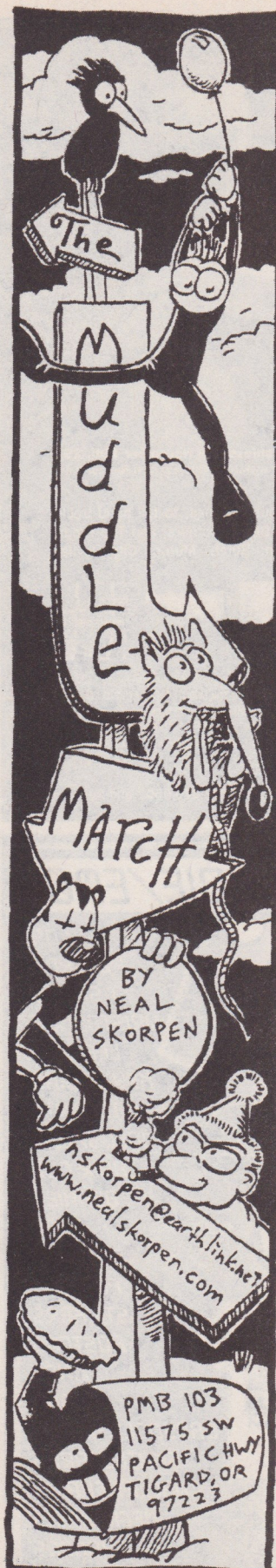
DungeonMaster23: Muslims.

BlenderLady587: Whatever.

I enjoy writing, as it's the only way I've found where I can truly express myself. The first day, however, was too soon to say anything. Everyone was reacting, speculating. This wasn't the time to start pointing fingers. Give it a few days, I thought. Let's get some more information before we all start freaking out and hurting people that don't deserve it. I also didn't want to be one of those people who posted their opinions to the Web, each one absolutely sure that they had the most profound take on the tragedy. No one did, though. The only difference was that I was willing to admit it and just sit back and not say anything. I could have written my feelings on the situation, but at that point it seemed better to just listen and educate myself.

As much as this catastrophe has shaken me out of my daydream existence, my sense of humor is still intact. While there is nothing funny about what happened, the knee-jerk hysteria, bigotry in the guise of patriotism, and complete lack of rational thought is something that deserves mockery.

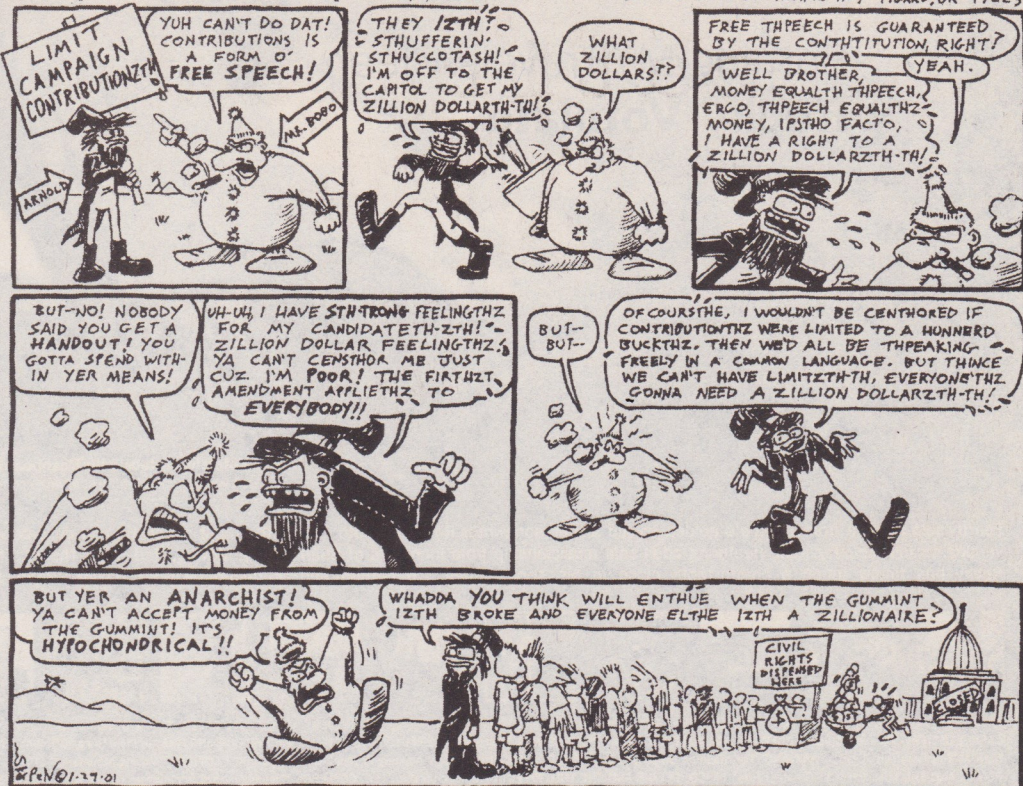
Some things just aren't funny, but give the human race enough time and they'll find some way of setting themselves up for a punchline. If I lose my ability to point out such absurdities, I might as well not exist at all. ❧



The MUDDLEMATCH

BY NEAL SKORPEN

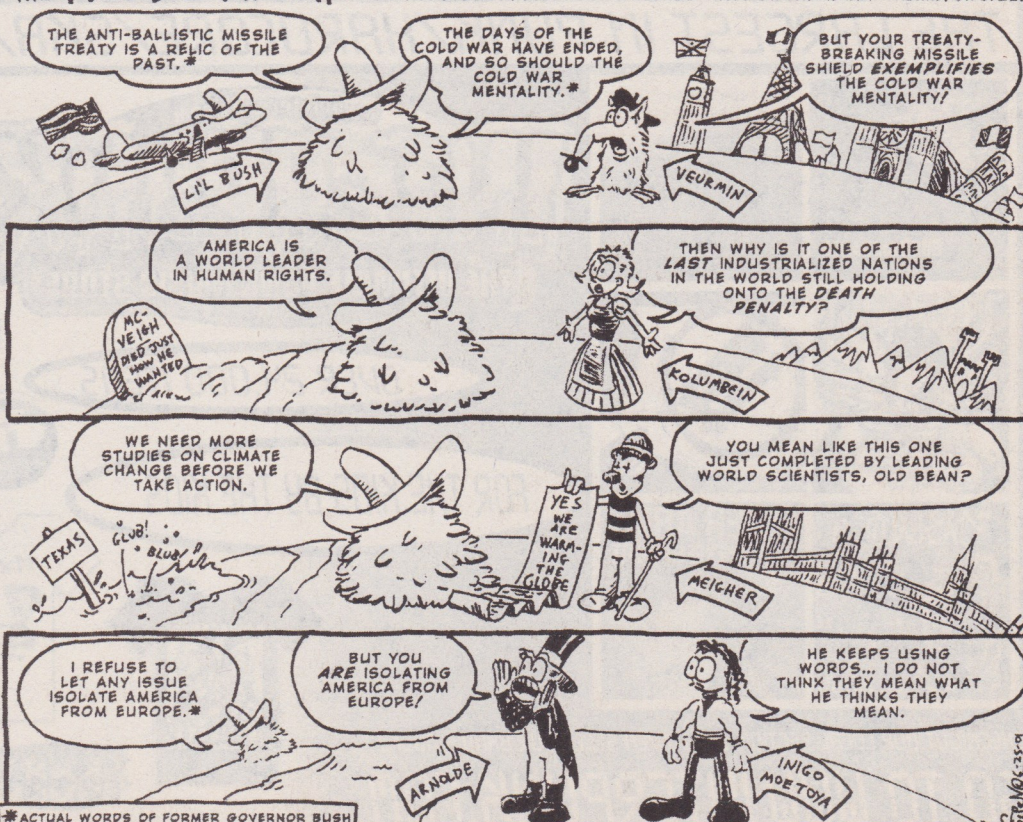
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America Beyond September 11th

(SEPTEMBER, continued from page 8)

"In 1941," he began, "an event occurred that changed a lot of things." He began musing about the cultural changes that began on that date, pointing out that the war forced the shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial one, moved more women into the workplace, and resulted in increasing mobility, in which Americans left the farm and moved to urban areas. Before that date, he said, everyone knew the folks next door; after the war, no one knew his neighbor any longer. That, he felt, was one of the most lamentable cultural changes wrought by WWII.

Of course, the war that ended with Hiroshima not only changed the American neighborhood, but technology and even poetry. As my buddy suggested when I told him about my cop interview, WWII changed us from a nation of Steinbecks to a Kerouac culture.

Vietnam, too, changed American culture. WWII gave us "The Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B"; Vietnam gave us "Give Peace a Chance." And while WWII brought Americans together in support of the government, accepting huge sacrifices in the war effort, Vietnam created profound distrust and disunity.

The cultural impact of September 11 is already making itself felt. For example, I have heard that several movie and television screenplays are being rewritten, with less violence. It would be nice if we emerged from this event with less violence in the media.

I have tried to imagine what other cultural changes this war will bring, but that's no easier for me, I imagine, than for a farmer in 1939 to imagine what America would be like a decade hence. I have no doubt, however, that things will be very different.

With any luck, perhaps some of the cultural legacy of WWII will be reversed. As hard as it is to look for good to come from this tragedy, it would be nice if we all ended up with better neighbors. ☐

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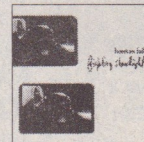


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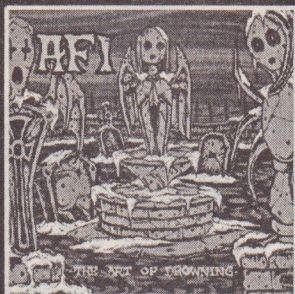
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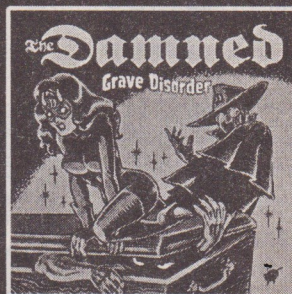
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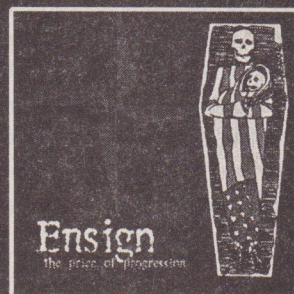
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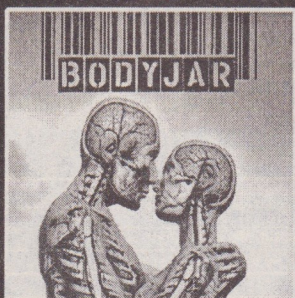
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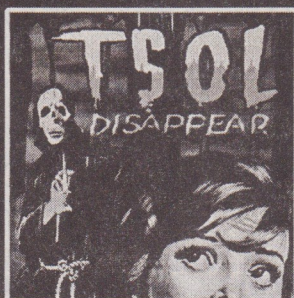
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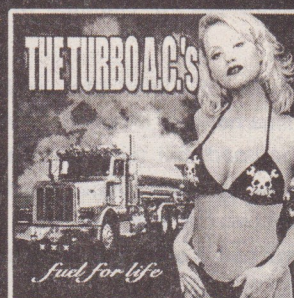
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The Big Bully

By David Borden

Our nation's drug war bullies manage to cause a lot of damage...

Who will stop the big bully?

"America: Love it or Leave it." It's the classic refrain sometimes heard from the mouths of our nation's less thoughtful patriots. Fortunately, most people know better than to pay attention to it. Democracy, after all, depends on the vigor of those who have criticisms to make and who do so out loud. Doing so doesn't mean that they don't love their country, and even those who don't should still be heard, if we do value democracy.

Leaving the country doesn't necessarily help, either. At a benefit recently in New York City, comedian Barry Crimmins said that he isn't leaving the United States because he doesn't want to be victimized by its foreign policies. Like most good comedy, Crimmins' comment is based on truth, in this case a sad truth. As a military and economic superpower, the presence of the United States is felt worldwide in many ways, for both good and evil.

Our government's reaction to growing calls for drug policy reform abroad is a stark example. The past few months have seen astonishing developments in the international dialogue on the issue. In Colombia, senators have introduced bills in the nation's congress calling for full drug legalization and permitting cultivation of coca, sparking a vigorous discussion in the media. At the same time, the National Assembly of States, led by Colombia's governors, has called for a serious, global legalization debate.

The tone of the governors' comments indicated that they are less interested in debating whether to make drugs legal than in how best to do so; a similar initiative came out of the Andean Parliament, which called on its members to take the legalization debate back to their own countries. In the Caribbean, meanwhile, Jamaica's National Ganja Commission has come out squarely in favor of marijuana decriminalization, and word is that the government is serious about doing something about it this time.

So what do US officials have to say about all of this?

US ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson issued a thinly veiled threat, saying that legalization would cause Colombia "problems with the international community." In Jamaica, an embassy spokesperson said that "[t]he US government will consider Jamaica's adherence to its commitments under the 1988 UN Drug Convention when making its determination under the annual narcotics certification review."

In other words, stop talking about legalization, or we'll ruin your economies.

This bullying is nothing new. Back in 1994, when Colombia's top

prosecutor, Gustavo De Greiff, came out for legalization, the US Justice Department and Senator John Kerry (D-MA) launched extremely vicious attacks on him. The fact that De Greiff had just risked his life leading the Colombian government's operation against top drug lord Pablo Escobar bought him no slack. The implied threats were so severe that De Greiff turned down a speaking engagement at Harvard because he feared retaliation by the US government against his country if he accepted.

And the bullying isn't limited to our hemisphere. In 1995, the show "Four Corners" (Australia's equivalent of "60 Minutes" or "Nightline") reported the US government had covertly threatened the country if it went ahead with an intended heroin maintenance trial program. The US at that time sat on the UN's International Narcotics Control Board, which has the power under treaty to shut down Australia's legal opiate industry, an important employer in the province of Tasmania. It was neither the first nor the last time that Australians have made such accusations, and heroin maintenance has yet to take place there despite extensive support and good results from such programs carried out elsewhere.

US officials have far less power with which to punish our European allies, but they still try to meddle. At the same conference from which our government frightened De Greiff away, Judge James P. Gray of California reported, that after visiting the Netherlands, that Dutch health officials identified two principal problems they have in dealing with drugs. One is that the country attracts users from around the European community and elsewhere, the cost of being an island of tolerance in a sea of repression. The other big problem for them is the United States, whose foreign officials just won't leave them alone!

The Dutch, at least, haven't been bullied, but have continued to go their own pragmatic way. Interviewed for the 1995 ABC News special, "America's War on Drugs: Searching for Solutions," a Netherlands health official commented, "We are a small country and have no illusion of changing your [the US] drug policy—but perhaps you have the illusion of changing ours."

Still, our nation's drug war bullies manage to cause a lot of damage—in the case of the Netherlands, for example, by spreading outright lies about their drug policy and its results. A legalization debate manual published by the DEA went so far over the top that the Dutch foreign ministry actually filed a formal complaint with the US State Department. And it's quite possible that without pressure from the US, portions of Europe would actually have ended drug prohibition by now, at least in part.

Who will stop the big bully? In a democracy, that means the people; it is up to us to discipline our government for its misdeeds. Love it or leave it? No, I don't think so. How about, "change it"? ❧

David Borden (borden@drcnet.org) is the Executive Director of the Drug Reform Coordination Network • <http://www.stopthedrugwar.org>

Who's Behind the Lens of the Camera?

How Americans' Privacy and the Nation's Security Could Clash

By J.C. Carnahan

Electronic surveillance by our government may reach unprecedented heights in the near future and the freedom we have often taken for granted could soon become obscure. The freedoms of American citizens could soon be put to the test if new legislation is passed through Congress concerning basic civil liberties such as our privacy.

Privacy advocacy groups, citizen's rights groups and political leaders have been questioning whether a new technology which matches digital photos to face-recognition surveillance cameras, a type of biometric system, should be permitted by law in public places such as the sidewalks we frequent. Of concern is the potential for misuse and a violation of personal freedoms caused by our government's interference with our everyday right to privacy. How can such surveillance be regulated to protect the privacy of the public?

Barry Steinhardt, Associate Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, pointed out to the *New York Times* in May, 2001 that "the police are not allowed to stop someone on the street for no reason and demand identification, but face-recognition could allow them to do just that."

In January 2001, Tampa, Florida became the first city in the United States to go public with software that allowed authorities to "spy" on civilians when it was used at Super Bowl XXXV. Authorities were using software called Face-It, which is linked through cameras that zoom in on unsuspected individuals to compare their facial features against images in a database of digital headshots.

Every fan that entered the gates was "sized up" as big brother compared each face with FBI photos of wanted felons as well as missing children. No arrests were made. As a result, Privacy International (a human rights group formed in 1990 as a watchdog on surveillance by governments and corporations) gave the 2001 Big Brother Award to Tampa for "Worst Public Official."



art by Colin Holmes

However, it turns out that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is not the only place that supplies mug shots for this technology in Florida. Marc Rotenberg, Electronic Privacy Information Center Executive Director, has said that the face-recognition program in Tampa also relies on photos made available from the Florida Division of Motor Vehicles, photos of people who don't even have a criminal record.

House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-Tex) told the *Washington Post* in August, "We are taking steps in the wrong direction if we allow this powerful technology to be turned against citizens who have done no wrong."

Flaws do exist in the face-recognition system. In Ybor City, a nightlife district of Tampa, 36 cameras were installed throughout the Centro Ybor Entertainment Complex and along East Seventh Avenue. The *St. Petersburg Times* reported on Aug 8, 2001 that an Oklahoma woman phoned Tampa police when Ybor City camera's caught Ron Milliron having lunch. The woman claimed Milliron was her ex-husband and was wanted on felony child neglect charges. The problem, according to the *St. Petersburg Times*, is that, as Tampa police learned after questioning him at his construction job site, Milliron has never been married, has no kids, and has never been to Oklahoma.

Protest to the cameras in Ybor City has prompted masked civilians making obscene gestures at cameras as well as straining relationships between townspeople and authorities.

Other problems have surfaced as well. The Defense Department found last year that differences in lighting, camera angles, distances and camera quality were all cited to have affected biometric performances of face-recognition. And unlike the faces of actual people, the mug shots on file don't change with time.

But we may now find city and state governments second-guessing their rejection of face-recognition surveillance as security becomes a major issue following the September 11th terrorist attacks. The

aftermath of the terrorist attacks helped Visionics, one of the providers of this system, stock soar 93 percent. They went from trading 50,000 shares a day to 3 million a day on NASDAQ. Visionics Chairman Joseph Atick said calls have now been coming in from countries around the world. And the technology is not cheap. The software costs around \$30,000 and is being offered by companies such as Viisage, as well as the aforementioned Visionics Corporation. Both have received federal money to finance this technology.

Aside from Tampa, the Department of Criminal Justice Services gave a \$150,000 grant to the city of Virginia Beach in July 2001 in efforts to help obtain face-recognition cameras. *The Virginian-Pilot*, however, reported that Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf criticized such action because she felt it would undermine the city's family-friendly atmosphere.

The Defense Department originally began using this system to monitor U.S. borders and help identify drug smugglers. The system is also currently being used about 100 casinos across the country.

Do cameras installed in public places invade citizen's privacy? Not even the words of our Forth Amendment, which guards against "unreasonable searches and seizures," may save us on this one. The *Boston Globe* pointed out in an August, 2001 article that a Supreme Court case in 1967 stated that the amendment cannot be translated into a general constitutional "right to privacy" and that the Fourth Amendment "protects people, not places."

How free will life in America be if cameras occupy every major intersection of our cities? Because software still has a long way to go, it cannot immediately be considered for widespread use. That means those of us who oppose or support such tactics have time to plea our cases.

"We must guard against going so far that we trade away the rights and privileges of a free society," said Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

In light of the terrorist situation we have recently experienced, various media polls have suggested that Americans would give up certain rights in exchange for security. But our country is not governed that way. Nor should we consider paying a price for something that inalienably comes with being an American.

Although the intent of our government is to protect and serve its public, we know too well of the run-ins politicians and law enforcement professionals themselves have had with the law. Should the lens also be turned on them?

The responsible thing to do is look at all the options. Is this our last resort or is this

the safest and most secure step to take? How can we be sure the software will be used properly and does it always work?

A member of the Jacksonville, Florida City Council proposed legislation that would keep the technology out of their city. Council member Gwen Chandler-Thompson cites her support of that August 2001 motion is due to the great risk of misidentification, as well as the opportunity for misuse.

Caught between how I feel about my own privacy and the protection of the people of this nation, I am reminded of words uttered by a 12-year old schoolboy who said "if you're not doing anything wrong, then what's the big deal?" But, while that sort of naiveté is honest and true, our expectations of American freedoms are far less simple. Our patriotism (nationalism) is, at times like these, most desperately needed to understand and stand up for our basic rights as free Americans. ❧

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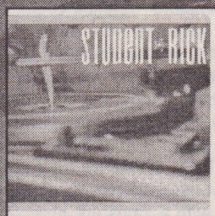


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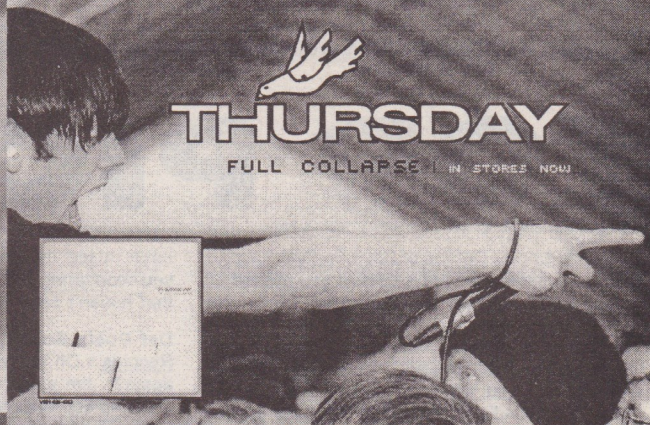
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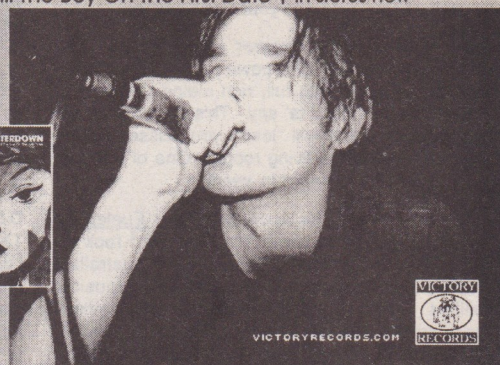
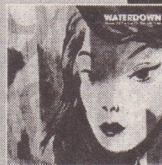
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TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.



20 Minute Loop • *Decline of Day* • Fortune Records • All right, fellow indie pop geeks: if you missed 20 Minute Loop's fantastic self-titled debut, now's your chance to jump on the "freak-pop" bandwagon. The band's intelligent, unique pop songs recall bands such as the Pixies and X, but these comparisons only hint at what 20 Minute Loop are all about. The band's not-so-secret weapons are the dueling, boy-girl vocals of Greg Giles and Kelly Atkins. Their voices twist and turn, weaving melodies around one another, and then harmonize beautifully. What a great record; just go out and buy *Decline of Day*, and get your freak-pop on!

Bayside • *See You In October* • Pop Culture • Yes! Now here is some hooky, powerful, extremely emotional power-punk with full, rich melodic flow. For most, that's all I gots 'ta' say. This Canadian quartet has energy that will "leave you scissor-kicking your way around the living room." One of the best new bands I have heard in years!

Blueline Medic • *The Apology Wars* • Fueled By Ramen • It's nice to come across a solid rock album. This is a fantastic release from Australia's Blueline Medic, a quartet of tremendous musical abilities. Their sound is expansive, with similarities to such bands as Burning Airlines, The Smiths, The Dismemberment Plan and more. It's pulled together by Donnie Dureau's magnificent vocals while the creative instrumentation showcases their talent to write hook-laden songs without having to give in to poppy-ness or candy-coating anything – the rock remains intact.

Broadway Project • *Compassion* • Eighteenth Street Lounge Music • There's an old saying that every dark cloud has a silver lining. For Dan Berridge, AKA Broadway Project, his silver lining came after he was diagnosed with a muscle fatigue illness called Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) which forced him to live indoors for long periods of time. To pass the time, he got a sampler and started making music. *Compassion* is the result. One word to describe this downtempo CD is "sparse." Another is "widescreen." There are plenty of genres sampled, from jazz to classical. His songs seem to evolve, successfully avoiding loops in order to keep the listener interested.

cLOUDDEAD • *Self-Titled* • Mush • Elements of hip hop are defiantly present, lines like "in accordance with my weird ordinance, my style is glass cutter, delicate/intense." But the diverseness doesn't stop there. These beats sound trippy and low budget and are very eerie, distorted and gritty. There are no titles for songs, they are listed by number and each track contains two to three different parts complete with changes in beats, flow style and stories. These three members (Odd Nosdam, Why?, and Doseone) have brought lyrics, which are puzzles to be figured out. Lyrics are mapped out in the sleeve. You'll need them. No, you'll want them. Though it's not a perfect gem, this disc will expand the mind. Starting the first track out with lines so consciously thought out like "do you know, how many times I thought about writing about the paper I'm writing on?...I lost my liquid tongue for the wet pen." Delivery of these lyrics and the sounds going on within these tracks

have raised the bar for originality and will have you wondering if there will ever be any bounds that haven't been reached before.

Def Poets Society • *self-titled* • New Disorder Records • Oh my, will the DJ please play that one again?! I'm sayin' that about every track on this indie hip-hop release that is fueled by amazing DJ skills. The crew was born from the Vancouver punk scene and is ready to step up and dish out non-stop flows (varying from laid back to in your face), amazing beats, funky samples and scratching that will dizzy you. Besides their turntablist, they feature five MCs and a beatboxer – the result is a hybrid of Jurassic Five and the X-Ecutioners. Every now and then an indie hip-hop release comes along to remind you that the best of hip-hop is heard by far too few people – don't be one of the people who sleeps on this. Listen to track five and tell me if that shit doesn't blow your mind. This CD is \$8ppd – my god, are you kidding me?!

DJ Logic • *The Anomaly* • Ropeadope Records • Though the album is technically put out by DJ Logic, this is anything but a one man show. Not only is he backed by a four-piece band, but he has guest performers like John Medeski and Vernon Reid helping out on a few tracks. *The Anomaly* refers to the record itself, an amalgamation of musical styles: jazz, hip-hop, drum 'n' bass, house, dub and countless others. Having a band makes all the difference, creating a warm atmosphere that regular hip hop and electronica music lacks. The blending of jazz and hip hop is genius, since both styles rely heavily on improvisation. You'll never be able to listen to either style on its own again.

Nakatomi Plaza • *Private Property EP* • Gunboat Records • This seven-song EP is a wonderful surprise. I'd never heard of Nakatomi Plaza, but their brand of melodic hardcore combined with super catchy punk is really freakin' good. The mix of male and female vocals is used perfectly, as well as the balance between well-sung and screamed lyrics. All of this would mean little if the band didn't have hugely creative orchestration. They are very talented and that is a rarity. The guitar parts tear and twirl all over the place, adding depth to the driving energy. Factor in that the lyrics have a strong socio-critical bent and this is definitely a brightly shining gem in a very crowded punk rock music scene.

New End Original • *Thriller* • Jade Tree • When you put Jonah from Far, Norm and Scott from Texas is the Reason, and Charlie from Chamberlain into a band, one would think that something amazing might happen. In the case of the New End Originals that is just what happened. Songs like "14 to 41" and "#1 Defender" rock with a mature power that is rare and amazing. While quiet moments such as "Weary Progress" show another side just as powerful yet melodic. This is the best new band I have heard in the last year, and a must purchase.

Superchunk • *Here's to Shutting Up* • Merge Records • Has it really been over a decade since the song "Slack Motherfucker" put Superchunk on the indie rock map? Believe or not, *Here's to*

Shutting Up is the 'chunk's eighth studio effort. Where does the time go? Though the *No Pocky* and *On the Mouth* days are behind us, the band still can crank out pogo-inspiring rock on tunes like "Rainy Streets" and "Art Class (Song for Yayoi Kusama)". The sound on *Shutting Up* continues along the evolutionary path of the past two albums, with more instruments and unique arrangements working their way into the distinct 'chunk sound. Who thought you'd ever hear a pedal steel guitar on a Superchunk album? *Here's to Shutting Up* may not be as immediately gratifying as their earlier material, but the more mature and diverse sounds quickly grow on you. Here's to another ten years as one of America's great rock bands.

The Faint • *Danse Macabre* • Saddle Creek • Welcome to the birth of hardcore new wave. Instead of being a carbon copy of the standard '80s fare, The Faint have taken the new wave genre and created their own mold. Their sound is reminiscent of Depeche Mode, Joy Division, New Order, The Cure, and even artists like Howard Jones and Dead or Alive. But The Faint takes their music to a new level of maturity and complexity. The sound is dark and swirling with a constant intensity and layers upon layers of activity. This is a band you will undoubtedly hear a lot more about – their sound is simply too hard to resist – and their live show is downright unreal.

The Philadelphia Experiment • *self-titled* • Ropeadope Records • If there was any question that Jazz is still alive, The Philadelphia Experiment comes with a loud answer – hell yes! This is by far the dopest jazz album released in the last ten years, maybe longer. It features jazz masters Christian McBride (bass) and Uri Caine (keyboards) along with the hip-hop drummer from the Roots, Ahmir Thompson (aka ?uest Love). Their style of jazz music is genre bending, combining soul, hip-hop, funk, drum and bass and, of course, jazz. This is a jazz album for the ages, a jazz album that will have your head-boppin', your toes tappin' and your soul lit up like a 1000-watt light bulb. Each of the 12 tracks flows into the next, like a multi-course meal of musical delight – from their homage to Grover Washington, Jr. on track 2 to their rendition of Marvin Gaye's "Trouble Man" on track 5 and on to McBride's bass attack on the latter half of track 12 (which is a rendition of "Just The Two of Us", played like never before). Welcome to the new age of Jazz.

Up, Bustle and Out & Richard Egües • *Master Sessions 2* • Ninja Tune Records • Recorded both in Bristol as well as in Cuba, *Master Sessions 2* is quite a unique recording. Cuban flautist Richard Egües, formerly of the popular Orquesta Aragón, among with beat meister 'Clandestine' Ein and producer Rupert Mould enlisted nineteen musicians to blend jazz, downtempo, dub and Cuban styles, such as the son and guaguancó into a ground breaking composition. Each song is different, and while many are instrumentals, others feature Spanish lyrics, resembling the now legendary Buena Vista Social Club (which featured Egües on flute). Finally, this superb recording features an enhanced CD portion with films shot in Cuba and New York.

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

CD releases

32forty • Hearts and Mirrors • Lotus Records • Hailing from the depths of Miami, this band brings their style of pop-punk rock with a force. "Drug-inspired and alcohol-fueled tunes" are full of melodic pop hooks and lyrics tell stories of broken hearts in a number of ways, from signs of anger to the edge of humor. "Autumn" and "Suicide" sound really good here.

Affront • People Who Live In Glass Houses • Phyte Records • Here is one for all you kiddies who really miss that old fast and furious punk rock, kiss my ass type of feel. Remember when punks had big friggin' mohawks? I don't think these guys do, but they sound like it. They even cover a Depeche Mode song, but I think we must take away some good taste points for that.

Alpha and Omega • Dub Philosophy • BSI Records • Alpha and Omega's *Dub Philosophy*, their latest effort for BSI Records, concentrates on neo-dub rhythms, with very few vocals. Their style is quite unique, incorporating strings, melodica and other keyboards with the usual thundering bass and reverbed effects.

AMFM • Getting Into Sinking • Polyvinyl Record Co. • Knowing they got a good thing going, AMFM release their second full length CD just 8 months after their well received debut, *Mutilate Us*. *Getting Into Sinking* follows a similar yet murkier path, with left of center pop tunes that find influence in the 60's sounds of the Beach Boys and the indie rock of Pavement.

Annika Bentley • With Leak, Blink & Breath • Billy Likes Records • With a voice like hers, Annika Bentley could sing over a bunch of chainsaws and it would sound beautiful. Her emotionally injured voice threatens to give out at times, and otherwise projects a melancholic tone, kind of like Tori Amos, but without sounding overly dramatic. Thankfully, she does not sing over any carpentry tools, but instead, she is backed by guitars, cello, viola and keyboards.

Anthem of the Century • The Enduring Vision EP • Join the Team Player Records • Anthem of the Century combine the classic hardcore sound of the 80's with the more modern metallic sound of today. The vocals are intelligent and intelligible, and the songs are full of singalongs and mosh parts. Unfortunately, this disc is about 18 minutes long.

As One • 21st Century Soul • Ubiquity Records • Multi-pseudonymed Kirk Degiorgio (New Religion, Elegy, Esoteric, Critical Phase, etc.) dons yet another hat to release his most recent album as As One. Aptly titled, *21st Century Soul* is rooted in classic soul and jazz, but Degiorgio updates them with electronic styles like breakbeat, two step and house. Two tracks feature Simon Jinardu on vocals.

Bad Astronaut vs. Armchair Martian • Split EP • Owned and Operated Recordings • The concept is simple. Take two bands, throw them in a studio together, and have each band cover three of the other band's songs. Finally, have both bands play together on the last song. Get it? Good. Not a bad idea, really. If you like power pop, you will like this.

Beatless • Life Mirrors • Ubiquity Records • It is quite interesting that Alex Attias and Paul Martin decided to call their collaboration Beatless, since their songs are full of R&B and hip hop beats. A few artists dropped by to make guest appearances, including vocalist Colonel Red and rapper Quasimoto. This style is best described as "Abstract Soul" since it includes elements from new jazz, broken beat and dance. Truly a groove enhancing album.

Benton Falls • Fighting Starlight • Deep Elm Records • This disc is put together well and features a smooth emotional sound that won't leave you feeling hung over with depression. The music is simple at times as it showcases vocals and storytelling lyrics about broken promises, junky friends and loneliness. "Swimming With You" begins the journey early on with lyrics like "I've waited 'til now to open up to you/ and I can't/ swimming with you is the hardest thing." This album meshes well without missing a beat, an indie rock release that will leave you lost in a trance from rich and powerful melodies coasting through tempo changes.

Benzoleene • Samurai Flu • self-released • This Wooster, Ohio quartet blends hardcore and death metal with interesting results. The vocals on "Lifeline" sound like two different demons screaming, one high pitched and another low pitched. Very cool. "Mammlade" has a slow part that reminded me of Rush for some reason. *Samurai Flu* is definitely worth checking out.

Beulah • The Coast is Never Clear • Velocette Records • There is no doubt that Beulah plays beautiful pop music, and not the saccharine laden drive pushed by the boy band du jour. I'm talking sweet, laid back, always-a-smile-on-your-face pop songs. Harmonies and vintage keyboards harken back to the days of the Beach Boys. Like Koufax and the

Ladybug Transistor, they blend sounds from the '60s and today for a retro, yet not outdated sound.

Bis • Return to Central • spinART Records • With the release of *Return to Central*, it is evident that Bis continues to mature and evolve as a band. They started out as a poppy, somewhat raw outfit who threw in electronic effects and disco beats into their songs. Soon their sound started to sound more and more electronic, culminating with last year's much too short *Music for a Stranger World*. Up until then, lead singer Manda Rin had a playful, almost teenage voice most of the time. This time around, their music is even more dance-oriented, and Rin sounds more subdued and melodic. As far as I am concerned, Bis keeps getting better and better with age.

Black Faction • Internal Dissident Part 1 • Soleilmoon Recordings • The press release describes this CD as how "The Divine Comedy" would sound, filtered through Andrew Dier's (the man behind the music) head. There certainly seems to be a rather unsettling atmosphere on *Internal Dissident Part 1*. Dark musical bridges are blended with minimalist electronic beats and ominous sound effects.

Bogdan Raczyński • Myloveilove • Rephlex Records • Someone hurt Bogdan...bad. Performing a musical 180, Mr. Raczyński slows it down from his glitchy, frenetic braindance, into a slow, melancholic sad-as-hell album. All 17 tracks are called "myloveilove," and some don't even have any beats at all! The few vocals on this record reveal his love for an unmentioned person, but the voice has a masked pain, a pain accentuated by the accordions (!) and trumpets. The press material says this is his last album. I sure hope not.

Boilermaker • Leucadia • Better Looking Records • *Leucadia* is a compilation of material from the newly reformed Boilermaker's early recordings. The band released three full-lengths and numerous singles in the mid-'90s, but gradually drifted apart as the decade progressed. While on an extended hiatus, the band members rediscovered the lost spark and decided to regroup. This is a great reintroduction to the band's indie rock/emo style. Glad to have you back!

Brent Berry • Inland • Kick Save Records • Not only re-recording some old favorite tunes, but also writing some of his own, Brent Berry unleashes the island jam party that is *Inland*. Mixing reggae, rocksteady, calypso, and West African Jump, he livens up the mood with his music.

Burnside • Loser Friendly EP • Out Of Step Records • This is a good punk disc in the Lagwagon style. There are some nice harmonies over not-too-pop guitar riffs. The songs are fast and fun but they don't have that sugar sweet diabolic coma feel that you get from some simpering pop-punkers. It is a good disc and my only complaint is that it clocks in at just over 15 minutes (seven tunes). The songs are short, so maybe we should get a few more? I'm looking forward to more from these guys.

Cable • Skyhorse Jams • This Dark Reign Recordings • Cable's lead singer, Randy-tarsen, sounds like Henry Rollins with damaged vocal chords. He doesn't scream, but he doesn't sing either. Aggressive as their music is, it sounds like a higher pitched version of sludge rock, with less of the low end that characterizes the genre. The guitar work has a touch of blues influence.

Capture the Flag • Walking Away From Everything • Conquer the World Records • *Walking Away From Everything* is Capture the Flag's second record, and it will blow you away. Blending power punk's energy with metal's heaviness, they storm through 12 tracks of pure emotion. Jeff's vocals are both melodic and raw, like his throat is about to explode from the strain.

Celesteville • Kohoutek • Tape Mountain • Celesteville is actually one guy recording on a 4-track cassette recorder. His stuff tends to be on the experimental side, yet a few songs, like opener "Waverly," attain a melancholic sweetness. Obviously, the album is lo-fi, but appealing all the same.

Champion • Come Out Swinging • Phyte Records • Seattle hardcore featuring guitarist Timm McIntosh from Trial. This disc is hard, loud, and strong and Champion does all the things that hardcore should do make you think, make you feel, and make you move. While the record is good, I imagine this band is 300 times better live. It also helps that they do a great Dag Nasty cover!

Chris McFarland • As If To Lay To Rest • In Music We Trust • The opening track "Drive" from this singer/songwriter is full of powerful vocals and a persistent acoustic guitar rock sound. This disc crosses paths between indie rock and folk providing a strong sentimental feeling. The atmosphere is deep, but not depressing. The mood changes but the purpose stays the same. Musically the release is along the lines of Counting Crows with a Peter Gabriel-ish vocal sound. Songs are very complete

and sincere and the album jams from beginning to end.

Coalition • The Ignition: From Friction to Fire EP • Smorgasbord • This quartet has been together for just over a year and offer up seven tracks of intense, melodic music that combines elements of hardcore, metal and emo. The musicianship is super tight, using weaving guitar parts along with a driving beat and great tempo changes. The vocals are aggressive, a mix of screaming and singing. I could do without the semi-preachy, anti-drug song ("Pusher"), but I guess I should expect it from a straight-edge band. But lines like "I can't wait to see you fall man, I'll be the first to kick the dirt over your face" are really unnecessary and shows a hateful side that may or may not be representative of what Coalition stands for. The music is good and most of the lyrics steer clear of the straight-edge mantra. But that one line sticks in my head and leaves me with a bad feeling overall.

Converge • Jane Doe • Equal Vision Records • I can honestly tell you that I have never heard a song like "Concubine," the opening track to *Jane Doe*. Immediately, the churning guitar sound of metal mixed with hardcore attacks your ears and causes internal bleeding. Vocalist Jacob Bannon does his best to physically injure you with his high pitched scream. Suddenly, Slayer-like guitar licks will literally give you goose bumps due to their unexpected appearance. My reaction to this song repeated itself with each subsequent track, for a total of 12 tracks of pain inducing bliss.

Darkest Hour • The Mark of the Judas • Join the Team Player Records • *The Mark of the Judas* is Darkest Hour's debut CD, re-released by Join the Team Player Records. Originally released in 2000, it marked the beginning of a band with a unique take on DC hardcore, by mixing European death metal song structures with hardcore vocals. Needless to say, Darkest Hour is quite an intense band, with quite an evil sound.

Daryll-Ann • Happy Traum • Excelsior • From Holland comes Daryll-Ann, a quintet of pop majesty. Capturing some of the best aspects of '60s pop rock, they've added their own quirkiness and style, creating some of the loveliest tunes I've ever heard. For over 10 years Daryll-Ann has been making music. This album is just another in a long line of superb releases. By track three you'll be sucked into the charming beauty of this album.

Dawncore • Entertainment for the Rest • Join the Team Player Records • Hungary's Dawncore started out playing classic hardcore, but switched to a more aggressive kind of metalcore. They are incredibly raw, pounding out metal riffs with hardcore vocals for an intense 25 minutes. In an unusual step for a hardcore band, a techno/jungle remix of one of their older songs closes out the album.

De Facto • Megaton Shotblast • Gold Standards Laboratories • Anyone who has experienced At the Drive-In's music knows that they are chock full of energy, which is why De Facto is such an unexpected surprise. Cedric Bixler and Omar Rodriguez (the ones with the big afros from At the Drive-In), along with Jeremy Ward and Isaiah "Ikey" Owens recorded a dub album. Instead of the usual repetitiveness of the genre, they threw in elements of electronica, keyboards ala Money Mark and Latin rhythms to keep things interesting.

Death Cab For Cutie • The Photo Album • Barsuk Records • Over mostly slow tempos and non-distorted guitars, Death Cab For Cutie's lead singer Benjamin Gibbard softly sings about his life. The mental image this album creates is one of an old 8mm home movie, flickering and unsteadily showing you events of the past. Gibbard's voice is subdued and a few deep breaths away from being whispered.

Denison Witmer • Of Joy & Sorrow • Burnt Toast Vinyl • This is the second full-length for the Philadelphia-based singer-songwriter. Witmer's songs tend to lean toward the "sorrow" side of the album title, but don't almost all good folk rock records? The simple, sparse arrangements recall early Elliott Smith and the late Nick Drake. I guess if I lived in Philadelphia, I'd be bummed too.

Destination Earth! • Adventures in Newspace • Gelatinous Productions • Much like Man or Astro Man? did in the past, Destination Earth! combines space themes with '60s surf music. Unlike MOAM?, they also include indie rock, pop and even rap in one track. Their take on surf music is excellent, though I found the other styles did not match up in quality. Obviously, humor is a big factor with this band, so you will surely smile a few times during *Adventures in Newspace*.

Dirty Rotten Imbeciles (DRI) • Greatest Hits • Deadline Music • For nearly 20 years DRI has been rocking out their brand of speed punk and thrash metal. They were one of the first punk bands I heard and, despite that being 15 years ago for me, their music is still amazing, the early stuff being my favorite. And this compilation features a slew of the older material including "Who Am I", "Mad Man", "Couch Slouch", "Violent

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Pacification" and "Yes Ma'am." The music is rapid-fire punk rock with similarities to early Suicidal Tendencies. These 17 tracks are a great example of one of the bands that led the '80s punk rock charge.

Doug Brown • Looking Glass Self • Nikazone Records • Upon reading the autographed press sheet written in third person, I deduced that Doug Brown is a Rembrandt of shameless self-promotion. However, what's painfully obvious is that Doug has fun making music and that you should have fun listening to it. On this, his fourth attempt, Doug invades you with a flood of styles, samples and sounds, showcasing his musical multi-talent while keeping it generally on the dance pop front. I can tell you right now this album will work well for generally happy people who like to sing along, bubbly girls, Christians and guys without ego problems. The rest of you jocks better stick to Puddle of Mudd.

Downpour • Footsteps Over Our Heads • Alveran Records • This is exactly the kind of music your mother was talking about when she said she didn't want any more of that noise in her house. I am still up in the air about this disc. It incorporates some good metal riffs, but has a distinctly old Death-type aura about it. It is walking the line between thrash and death metal, of which I have never been a fan. If you dig old Death tunes, then you will cream over this.

Erase Errata • Other Animals • Troubleman Unlimited • Influenced by New Wave, No Wave and any other kind of Wave, the four ladies who make up Erase Errata somehow make noise sound beautiful. Sara's guitar playing is erratic and out of tune, Jenny doesn't always sound like a woman and Ellie and Bianca's bass and drums feel forced, hurried. All of this, you see, is on purpose, and well executed.

Fernando • Dreams of the Sun and Sky • Domingo Records • The music on this disc has a mellow folk-pop, bluesy feeling to it. Full of soulful, dark emotions that instill a rage of optimism when it's all done, this album is great from beginning to end. This effort displays musical diversity by Fernando while playing electric and acoustic guitars, percussion, lead and background vocals. From the opening track "The Jackal" to "Blue Room," the vocals are smooth and stand out among the many instruments and sounds in each track. The lyrics are a perfect compliment to the mood setting. A number of musicians contributed with guitar, cello, violin, clarinet and upright bass sounds to add to an atmospheric follow up for Fernando. This release doesn't have the "shattering rock attack" sound that his debut *Old Man Motel* consisted of but the delivery is just as strong, only from a different angle.

Fields of Fire • Keep It Alive • Phyte Records • I couldn't help but think back to my days spent skateboarding as a kid while listening to Fields of Fire. This band easily could be defined as skate-punk, but as I listened to the record more I realized that this band avoided labels about as much as my friends and I avoided cops at all the best skate spots in town. A blend of '80s skatecore, early straight-edge, honest lyrics and a forward style make this release worth checking out.

Four Tet • Pause • Domino Recording Company • Four Tet is actually composed by one Kieran Hebden, founding member of English experimental outfit Fridge. This, his fourth album under the Four Tet moniker, is a rather mellow, electronic record. Most of the sounds on this record, like harps and other strings, seem sampled rather than created inside some box. Sometimes the songs degenerate into atmospheres, instead of actual songs. I'm sure Brian Eno is a big influence on Hebden.

Frankie Sparo • Arena Hostile • Constellation Records • Recorded at Amsterdam radio station VPRO during Sparo's January tour with A Silver Mt. Zion, *Arena Hostile's* four tracks feature Sparo's emotive, slightly raspy vocals and slow tempo guitars and violins, accompanied by minimalist electronic effects. Closing out the album is a cover of the Rolling Stones' "I Am Waiting."

Fugazi • Furniture EP • Dischord • The first track of this three-song EP is called "Furniture" and it's as close to 13 Songs era Fugazi as I've heard. It's absolutely awesome, powerful and familiar in the best of sense. The energy of that one track alone could power a car – it's immense. The second track is an instrumental tour de force. The EP closes with "Hello Morning," a rock and roll attack, charging from the gate and not letting up. Send in your \$4ppd right now.

Fugazi • The Argument • Dischord • What more can you say about one of the most influential people in the independent music scene? Whether you go back to Ian MacKaye's punk roots with Minor Threat or his record label, Dischord, this guy has been creating amazing things for over 20 years. Since 1988, Ian and the guys (Guy Piccolotto, Joe Lally and Brendan Canty) from Fugazi have put out numerous releases, constantly adjusting, maturing and re-adjusting their sound – never failing to offer up something both creative and original. With *The Argument*, Fugazi proves that they are still one of the best bands around, rocking out 11 tracks of intense,

sonic assault. Their previous full-length release, *Instrument Film Soundtrack*, showed that Fugazi is far more than a rock and roll band, displaying their jazzy, experimental and instrumental abilities. Some of that carries over, but only as an enhancement to Fugazi's rock side. The combination leads to Fugazi's most creative and diverse work yet – a fusion of punk, rock and roll, funk, and jazz, as well as various experimental styles that are unclassifiable.

Fury 66 • Red Giant Evolution • Sessions Records • It came as quite a shock to see that the totally nasty cover picture on this disc is a real photograph of some schmuck's "leg-cutting" done at a tattoo parlor. As I get older, I guess that it becomes inevitable that I get less and less hip. That aside, the music is good, if fairly standard, new punk. Lots of good, fast guitar riffs and yelled vocals. The music has that old "anthem" feel to it like the Brit kids really used to dig.

Fury For Another • self-titled • Smorgasbord • Hailing from the DC-area, Fury For Another embraces the hardcore/punk sound that led the skatercore movement. Sounding similar to such bands as 7 Seconds and Gorilla Biscuits (even Good Riddance at times), this trio rocks out 11 aggressive, melodic, positive tunes. It's their debut album and is a very impressive release and likely only a taste of what FFA has to offer. Added bonus: Awesome crunchy, punkcore cover of the Dead Milkman's "Instant Club Hit."

Future Pilot AKA • Tiny Waves, Mighty Sea • Geographic Records • Former Soup Dragons bassist Sushil K. Dade is the sole member of Future Pilot AKA. On *Tiny Waves, Mighty Sea*, he combines Scottish and Indian musical styles. To accomplish this, he enlisted the help of the Delgados, plus members of Belle and Sebastian and Teenage Fanclub. The result is a mixture of folk rock, slowed down surf, Indian vocals and beautiful melodies.

G.C.F. • Good Clean Fun • Phyte Records • At first glance you won't be sure that to expect. The album cover is a parody off of the groundbreaking N.W.A. album *Straight Outta Compton* but comparisons end there. This is a hard and heavy, positive, good-natured punk album from a band out of D.C. These guys basically poke fun at everything in the mainstream with sarcastic energy. The disc opens with the words "you are now about to witness the strength of positivity" (another N.W.A. parody) and has a good sound with lyrics you can make out without reading the inside sleeve. "The Ice Cream Man Cometh" and "Today Was A Positive Day" stand out.

Glasseater • 7 Years Bad Luck • Fearless • Combining screamed with fantastically well-sung vocals, Glasseater is able to run the gamut of emotions. The music is loaded with tight, thick melodies that are infectious as hell. You may have already heard this album; it was released on Eulogy Records not too long ago. But Fearless signed the band, re-mixed, remastered and repackaged the album. It sounds better and looks good. If you have the Eulogy version, I won't tell you to run out and get this. But if you don't have it – this is an awesome powerpunkcore album with sounds akin to Thursday and Grade.

Gorky's Zygotic Minci • How I Long to Feel That Summer In My Heart • Mantra Recordings • You never know what to expect from Gorky's Zygotic Minci. Last year, they delivered the mini-LP *The Blue Trees*, where most songs were acoustic and somewhat weird. This time around you'll get poppy arrangements, sweet melodies and Richard James's my-underpants-are-too-tight vocals, as well as an array of instruments, both acoustic and electric.

Grade • Head First Straight to Hell • Victory Records • No, they aren't a metal band, although between the album title and artwork you'd think this is the latest Slayer album. (The artwork did get the album banned from Best Buy – which is a good thing 'cause you should be getting this at your local indie record shop anyway.) While Grade is definitely influenced by such metal-rockers as Black Sabbath and Judas Priest, they are far more diverse. Grade uses a combination of screamed and sung vocals to add emotional force to each song. This album, their second full length, is definitely more mature than their first and excellent *Under the Radar*. The music is more intricate, with wild-good guitar and bass parts combined with expert drumming and tempo changes and enough melody to have your head spinning. The band's experience, eight years' worth, really shows on *Head First*... through the diversity of tracks, styles and instrumentation. This album flows with immense intensity, like Niagara Falls or like waves against the rocky cliffs of the Northern California coast – if you're swept away (and you will be), prepare to be pounded.

Grafton • Self-Titled • Derailler Records • This three-piece punk rock band is very aggressive and sounds complete as a band. These guys bring a grimy, shit kicking attitude that makes these tracks more intense, and comprehensible. Tracks like "Tom Selleck" and "Phineas Gage" race like locomotives through the Midwest. But you really get a feel for

who these guys are on "Oxblood," shouting "people say I don't treat myself right... I know that I'm gonna die."

Harry Manx • Dog My Cat • Northern Blues Music • This one-man band out of Toronto has assembled a moving blues-folk album with great harmonica and guitar work. The album carries in a mellow fashion and songs kind of run into one another with the same sound. The music is good but the vocals are stale at times. "Bring That Thing" and "Love Ain't No Game" kind of shuffle the sound around on this disc.

Heavenly • Heavenly vs. Satan • K Records • For the first time, Heavenly's debut album is now available in the U.S. Their sugary, jangly pop songs feature beautiful female vocals and upbeat arrangements. Not only do you get the entire debut album, but you also get six bonus tracks from out of print singles, plus liner notes by Lois Maffeo.

Hopsing • Old School, New School, No School • self-released • Central Florida's Hopsing offers up their debut full-length album, 18 tracks of punk rock with a multitude of influences. The tempo on nearly all the songs is rapid and intense. But it's not just straight-ahead punk rock. Hopsing uses elements of funk, metal, jazz and ska to push their songs to a level that won't have them pigeonholed as one-dimensional punk music. The attitude of *Old School*... combines both aggression and fun – a perfect mix.

Integrity • In Contrast to Tomorrow • Victory Records • To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the release of their first full-length record, *Those Who Fear Tomorrow*, Integrity put together *In Contrast to Tomorrow*. It is a compilation of early recordings, dating from 1989-1991, including their out of print and hard to find first EP, *In Contrast to Sin*. Also included are some remixes and live tracks, making this CD the definitive Integrity collection in what hopefully is the first in a series.

Interference • Take That Train • Ubiquity Records • *Take That Train* is a collection of songs that were previously released on EPs, plus three new tracks. Paul Martin mans the decks, while Tyrrell takes care of the live instruments that populate the album. They try to blend their love of rock and funk into their songs, which are mainly bouncy, organic techno mixed with house and 2-step or jazzy downtempo.

It Takes All Kinds/The Young Ones • Our Community Is More Than Where We Live • Punks Before Profits • This super DIY release captures honest punk attitude and aggression. Coupled with a political sentiment, it makes for an awesome album featuring two NY bands. It Takes All Kinds features female vocals that remind me of Blatz (old Lookout Records band). The music is fast-paced punk rock with a recording quality that makes you feel like you're at a live show, which is a good thing in this case. The 17 songs on *It Takes All Kinds* are short, in-your-face anthems of angst and social awareness. The Young Ones deliver 11 tracks of their own brand of aggressive, snotty, rapid fire punk rock. While *It Takes All Kinds* is straight-forward in their style of punk, The Young Ones offer some varied and excellent changes in style and orchestration using tempo changes and breaks. Both bands deliver, giving the listener a total of 28 tracks of music that will get your blood flowing, your fist pumping and your brain thinking socio-politics.

Jah Warrior Presents Peter Broggs • Jah Golden Throne Dubwise • BSI Records • This album is a companion to *Jah Golden Throne*, Peter Broggs's release on Jah Warrior records in May of last year. It is also Jah Warrior's first US release. Broggs, who has been involved in the reggae scene since the early '70s, drops vocal phrases over Jah Warrior's expertly crafted sound system dub beats, heavy on the bass and the reverb.

Kidsnack • First Steps • Double Zero Records • Although the band itself is pretty tight, it doesn't do much to further punk rock as a genre, which right now, is starting to sound like drum and bass circa 1998 (i.e. stale). This is *Kidsnack's* 2000 debut and I hope their sound has evolved since last year so they can better distinguish themselves from the other fifty thousand pop-punk bands out there. Thumbs up to the sleeve art though, it at least makes you want to pick it up and check it out.

Kill Creek • Colors of Home • Second Nature • It is amazing how a band like Kill Creek can create songs like the slow, beautiful "Cops," with a lethargic beat and whispered vocals, and the all out rocker "Serotonin," with a driving beat and layered vocals and screaming chorus. After being dropped by Mammoth, they settled on Second Nature Recordings, and the truth is they have never sounded better. A four year hiatus could not stop this post-hardcore outfit from creating great music.

Landing • Circuit • The Music Fellowship • Following their debut EP, *Centrefuge*, this full length album does not stray far from the formula which makes Landing stand apart: textures upon textures of atmospheric sounds. Keyboards, guitars, drums and bass are infinitely looped until you cannot tell where the original sound started. Vocals are few and far between, treated more like another layer of sound. In one word, excellent.

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Leftöver Crack • Circuit • Hellcat Records • Leftöver Crack was formed from the ashes of No Commercial Value and Choking Victim. Many of the songs were written up to ten years ago, but for some reason or other were never recorded with either band. This might explain why no two songs are alike. Ska, rockabilly, metal, punk and hardcore all rear their ugly faces in this record. There's even a nice little piano solo on one track.

LTJ Bukem feat MC Conrad • Progression Sessions Vol. 6—America Live 2001 • Good Looking Records • The highly successful *Progression Sessions* series has taken a new twist—a live album. Recorded in Boston in the Spring of 2001, Vol. 6 features LTJ Bukem manning the decks as MC Conrad rocks the mic on 10 tracks by artists like Nookie, Makoto, Rantoul, Future Engineers and MC Conrad himself. Also included are instrumental studio versions of these drum 'n' bass tracks.

Mad For The Racket • The Racketeers • Muscletone Records • Pay attention, because this is an interesting collaboration of musicians. Wayne Kramer (legendary MC5 guitarist) and Brian James (guitarist for The Damned) are the brains behind this rock project. Joining them includes Stewart Copeland (drummer for The Police), Clem Burke (drummer for Blondie) and Duff McKagan (Guns N' Roses). The result is a skilled offering of rock tunes with a hard-driving attitude and energy. There's a dark side/feel to some of the tracks that adds to the overall result.

Maya Shore • Farewell to Introductions • The Music Fellowship • Even though they have been together since 1997, Maya Shore had not recorded a debut album—until now. *Farewell to Introductions* gathers their best tracks from the last three years and compiles them into one album. Instrumental and vocal tracks are scattered about, with an emphasis on guitar melodies. Keyboards, violin and other effects add to the mellow vibe. Think of Meisha, The Letter E, Physics and Do Make Say Think.

[minmae] • Lucy in the Sky with DNA Helixes EP • Dogprint Records • [minmae] came to be when Sean Brook's band cancelled a gig at the last moment, leaving him to come up with something to fill the time. Two full length CDs and several 7"s later and he still hasn't stopped. His music continues to evolve in this EP, starting off with an almost seven minute instrumental that leans toward the experimental. From there he varies things a bit, trying to "capture some of the feeling of bands like Guided by Voices, Smog, John Lennon, David Bowie, Teenage Fanclub" and others. With his dynamic voice and the help of Arabella Makalani (drums) and Daniel Power (bass), it is pretty evident he succeeded.

Modest Mouse • Sad Sappy Sucker • K Records • Fans of Modest Mouse rejoice! *Sad Sappy Sucker* is the lost Modest Mouse album, finally released. It was recorded in 1994, and was supposed to be their debut album, but it got lost in the shuffle. Besides the full recording, they included tracks from Isaac Brock's four-track recording days, as well as nine songs from his Dial-A-Song service he ran on his answering machine.

Motorplant • American Postcard • Shiretown • Chock full of power-pop goodness, this foursome of New Hampshireites give us catchy rock-funk that isn't overly heavy and that's devoid of stupid-ass teen angst. It's good, straight ahead rock and roll with an alternative mix. Great songwriting, and an abundance of raw energy and emotion.

No Use For A Name • Live in a Dive • Fat Wreck • This is definitely the best live recording I've ever heard. And for good reason; Fat Wreck had a 24-track mobile recording studio to record this instead of the standard mixing board situation. You can close your eyes and you're right there. Or check out the multi-media footage that is included on the CD. Oh, that's not enough? There's a mini-comic with the CD and a full-size comic with the LP. As for the music, it's No Use's brand of power punk with thick melodies, awesome vocals and kick-ass tempo changes. The lyrics are emotional and socially charged. And since these guys have been doing this for almost 15 years, this shit is tight as hell and more addictive than cocaine.

Nora • Loser's Intuition • Trustkill Records • Nora finally settled on a lineup for their first full length release, and they could not be better for it. These ten tracks will leave you on the floor, gasping for air, as you get pounded by the Slayer like riffs and intense screaming vocals. This is hardcore at its hardest.

Now It's Overhead • self-titled • Saddle Creek Records • For Saddle Creek Records, whose musical output consists of bands from Omaha, to release a record from an Athens, GA band says a lot about the band, reminiscent of early REM or the Cure. Now It's Overhead's dark, lush melodies and layered chorus vocals are nothing short of perfect beauty. Both programmed and live drumming keep the pace during these nine mostly mellow tracks.

Old Time Relijun • Witchcraft Rebellion • K Records • This is the third album by Old Time Relijun, and they seem to get weirder as time goes

on. Aarington de Dionysio's singing is all over the place, from yelling to snickering to even sounding like Popeye on one track. Forget about a genre for these guys. They tackle punk, gospel, free jazz, experimental and even a little reggae. The listener can't help but feel uneasy while this album plays on.

ONQ • The Supreme Weight • QuZel Records • ONQ core member Luca Galupini has experimented with a whole range of genres, from grunge to grind-core to experimental and noise chaos. It appears that ONQ is an outlet for his mellow side. His style consists of undistorted guitars, slow beats and vocals run through an effects machine. Clarinet and accordion show up on a few tracks. *The Supreme Weight* features re-arranged versions of ONQ's past releases.

Owen • self-titled • Polyvinyl Records • Mike Kinsella is known for his work with American Football, Cap'n Jazz, Joan of Arc and Owls. Now he will be known for his latest project, Owen. Truly a solo venture, he played every instrument and did all the recording at his home studio. His only outside help came from Rainer Maria's Caitlín De Marrais, who sang backup on two tracks. This self-titled album is an extension of American Football, only slower and more complex. His voice soothes the soul, and his melodic acoustic guitar pleases the ear.

OX • Don't Call Me Lazy • Allegory Records • The opening guitar on the first track "Thief" sounds remarkably like Led Zeppelin's "Misty Mountain Hop." Then the trippy, echo-y vocals come in. Although they are almost impossible to decipher, they seem to complement the trippy atmosphere. Just like an ox, the music comes charging, with a muddy distortion effect on the guitars and pounding percussion.

Ozma • Rock and Roll Part Three • Kung Fu Records • The whole time I was listening to this album, I kept thinking of Weezer. Actually, Ozma sounds like Weezer with keyboards. Well, that makes them the Rentals, doesn't it? Seriously, though, their poppy sound, combined with just enough guitar distortion and melodic vocals works very well. *Rock and Roll Part Three* would fit well next to your Nada Surf and Nerf Herder CDs.

Parker & Lily • Hello Halo • Orange Recordings • Be careful when you listen to this album or you might miss the whole thing. Undoubtedly, the atmosphere is one of melancholy. Parker Valentine sings with a quiet resignation, sometimes backed by Lily Wolf's soothing voice. All sorts of reverbed keyboards give *Hello Halo* a dreamy feel, and slide guitars give some tracks a southwestern vibe. Think of Calexico on the verge of suicide.

Paul Reddick and the Sidemen • Rattlebag • Self-released • This album is pure aggressive blues and features some serious harmonica playing. Paul Reddick is joined by The Sidemen and you immediately get the feel that their live show must be an event to check out. The music here has a good energy that keeps you goin' and the musicians compliment each other well. On "Pearl River Blues" a sliding guitar carries the mood while slowing things down and flowing into "Blind River Blues" which has the band laid back in a folk music kind of way. "Trouble Again," "King O' the Zig-Zag" and "I'm a Criminal" make these guys sound fun.

Piebald • Barely Legal & All Ages • Big Wheel Recreation • Piebald fans rejoice. They are going back out on the road after taking some time off. To celebrate this joyous occasion, they have released this 2CD set which recounts their history. Starting off with a recording of a 1994 Battle of the Bands (which they lost), a few 7" releases, their *Sometimes Friends* Fight CD and ending with a recording from a German radio show, the first CD shows Piebald in their formative stages. CD number 2 shows their latest efforts, from *When Life Hands You Lemons*, a couple of demos, some live recordings and a few unreleased studio tracks (including a kick ass cover of Slayer's "South of Heaven"). This is the closest you can get to having a box set.

Pilot Round the Sun • self-titled EP • self-release • It seems like the more new music you listen to nowadays, the harder it is to pinpoint its category—this evolution is a good thing. PRTS is a new band from PA with a very warm, inviting sound kinda like that first cuppa joe on a Monday morning. This is courtesy of the band's careful approach coupled with the frontman's take-em-or-leave-em quasi-falsetto vocals (reminiscent of Mojave 3). In a nutshell, this band needs to be signed so they can be distributed and better heard. By the time you read this, they should have finished recording an even newer batch of tracks.

Pilote • Do It Now Man • Domino Recording Co. • Pilote's dabbling in leftfield, downtempo and electro are both gloomy and humorous. Songs like "Paul Oakenfold," "Fairplay" and "The Dialogue" feature snippets of people talking that leave the listener with an unsettling feeling. "Beaulieu Road" sounds like a lost track from Mu-ziq's more melodic catalogue, while "Immobile" could have been included in Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works* collection.

Pinhead Circus • self-titled EP • Not Bad Records • This disc is a repress of a 7" they did last year plus 2 new tracks. However, those are transcended by an awesome cover of Prince's 1987 single "I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man." They couldn't have covered a better Prince track. That cover is worth the price of the CD alone. Otherwise, it's standard fodder for you underground punk fans.

Pix the Pilot • Pix the Pilot EP • New Disorder Records • Described as "structuralist punk rock," this release features a 3-piece band with male and female vocals. Recorded by Andy Ernst (worked with AFI and Green Day) this five-song EP is full of power and creativity as it shows off a different style in mixing punk and rock. At times sounding like Sonic Youth, tracks like "Unwound" (opens with the line "desperate wisdom whispers behind my back...") and "We Work for a Living" jam out.

Portastatic • Looking for Leonard • Merge Records • Mac McCaughan not only runs Merge records, but he also fronts Superchunk and Portastatic. Portastatic is an outlet for music that wouldn't fit Superchunk's style, thus creating a wide array of musical recordings. His latest is *Looking for Leonard*, which is actually the score to an independent film by the same name. As with any film score, there are high points and low points, and Portastatic handles them expertly. "Luka's Theme—Shaker Mix" evokes a dusty desert, with reverb guitar providing the main melody, while the cellos and whistle in "Stealing Romance" remind of a new love affair.

Pram • Somniloquy • Merge Records • Although technically an EP, *Somniloquy* packs in 43 minutes worth of music, including brand new tracks and some remixes from last year's *Museum of Imaginary Animals*. They sound somewhat like Stereolab, since both bands share a love for keyboard melodies and have female lead singers with quirky, smooth voices. Tracks are remixed by Pione, Baily Mule, Terry Funken, Andy Votel and Sir Real. The remixes are more experimental than the originals (as if that's possible!) and don't have as many vocals.

Recover • Rodeo and Picasso • Fueled By Ramen • Jesus Christ! What a sweet surprise this record is. Emo melodic hardcore would be a classification you could start with, but this band breaks the molds with power, grace, and creativity. The songs are amazingly crafted and the CD is brilliantly arranged to make for a hell of a musical trip.

Red Monkey • Gunpowder, Treason and Plot • Troubleman Unlimited • You could compare Red Monkey to Blonde Redhead, in the sense that both bands play music with weird rhythms and chord changes. The difference is in the vocals. While Blonde Redhead's Kazu Makino has a high pitched, very emotional voice, Red Monkey's Rachel has a lower pitch, and sounds somewhat detached, even bored at times. This is what post-punk is all about.

Reuben's Accomplice • I Blame the Scenery • Better Looking Records • From the edge of the Arizona desert that's almost as bleak musically as the surrounding landscape emerges Reuben's Accomplice. In their six-year existence, they've built a nice little resume for themselves, opening for the likes of Brainiac, Pedro the Lion, and the Promise Ring. Members of Calexico and Jimmy Eat World make appearances on their first full-length record. The band's earnestness and innocence shine through these fourteen indie rock tunes. They've worked hard to get this record out for the world to hear and it pays off in a promising debut.

River City High • River City High Won't Turn Down • Doghouse • As this CD spins in the player, I contemplate how a band can be good without doing anything really new, different, or special. That's pretty much how *...Won't Turn Down* comes across. Something good to sing along to in the car, something to rock out to in the morning, but nothing you are gonna brag to your friends about. The sound is big, and these guys could just as easily be on MTV as on Doghouse Records. It's a good record but you probably already have something in your collection that sounds just like it.

River City Rebels • Playing to Live, Living to Play • Victory Records • You can't think of the River City Rebels as a ska band just because they have a horn section. Like Snuff, they are a punk band who happens to play horns as well as guitars. As the title suggests, their lives revolve around punk music, and they have the right combination of street style grittiness and singalong "whoas" to keep you going for a while.

Roots Manuva • Run Come Save Me • Big Dada Recordings • The energy on this disc stays at a high level as Roots brings a blend of hip hop and reggae that is "music for the mindful." Beats are smooth and bang with a thump. Lyrics are complex and his delivery is a perfect blend of wordplay and style. This disc is a must have whether gaining insight, smokin' out or just listening while you drive. There are electronic noises and guitar feedback instilled within loops; all sounds are legit, making this album unbelievable. Can't pick hotspots because this whole album is well beyond that.

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Ross and the Hellpets • *Teddy Bears Gone Bad* • **self-released** • Ross Beach (guitar/vocals) has been in numerous bands, including Squint and Neutral Milk Hotel. Now he's offering up his new project, a quirky pop band with dueling male and female vocals and a ton of harmony. Besides the standard guitar/bass/drum setup, they use a lot of keyboards to enhance the sound, adding a sort of '60s-'70s flair. At various times they remind me of a number of bands including Too Much Joy, They Might Be Giants and even The Weakerthans.

Sanbox • *I Didn't Go to the Prom cos I Couldn't Afford Not cos Nobody Wanted to Go With Me* • **self-released** • While geographically located in the garden state of New Jersey, this three-piece power pop punk band is rooted deeply in the influence of the East Bay scene. This is the pre-released demo for their upcoming full length and shows a lot of potential, but at times lacks the production that demos usually do. Available from the band for free, it's worth checking out and, with some time, this band could do something really good.

Santa Sangre • *Feast For The Gods* • **Eulogy Recordings** • Heavy and ferocious are perhaps the two words best suited for this band. With dark, socially inspired lyrics, this is a beautiful blend of metal and hard-core. This 11-song disc is sure to be a hit with anyone who likes Pantera, Machine Head or Sick of It All. I am eagerly awaiting more music from these five guys.

Scott Henry • *Buzz: The Politics of Sound* • **Ultra Records** • American DJ Scott Henry has gained increasing popularity with his international DJ gigs at some of the most recognizable venues around. For a taste of what happens at those gigs, listen to this, his second album, named after Buzz, a club night he started in Washington DC. In it you will find over an hour of continuously mixed dark and tribal house and techno, similar to Sasha and Danny Tenaglia.

Scott Johnson • *Dreams in the Making* • **Googol Press** • This guy could have done the soundtrack to *Ferngully: The Last Rainforest*. He's got that kind of gentle, safe, white-guy-wanna-be-Caribbean sound that works for kiddie tunes. The tunes almost rock. They are cotton-candy inspirational tunes, very polished, very catchy, very happy, full of dream-pursuit and over-the-top "live life to its fullest" sentiment. Personally, I think he's having a mid-life crisis.

Seldom • *Places I Haven't Seen* • **Casa Recording Co.** • The first track "Can't Must" sets the tone on this five track EP of indie rock. The music by this Seattle three-piece sounds good; instruments are sluggish and drown out. Lyrics come across as poetry verses, at times simple and repetitious but vocals slide along side the melodic rhythms on this disc well. The laid back feel to this release could instill some inspiration through times of reflection while stating "I can't go on, I must go."

Shiner • *The Egg* • **DeSoto Records** • Inevitably, if you're on DeSoto, if your album is drenched in layers of guitar, and if J. Robbins produces your record, you're going to have to deal with that whole Jawbox comparison thing. Yeah, they've got the post-punk DC sound going on, but they do it oh, so well: the thick guitar sounds, the unique chord voicings, the sudden time changes, and the subtle melodies. They've got a softer side too with mellower, sparser tunes that provide a nice change of pace and show a depth and maturity lacking in many indie rock bands nowadays.

So Called Artists • *Paint By Number Songs* • **Mush** • "We've been dubbed as experimental, but we're just doing what we do naturally," says the crew (Sole, Alias and DJ Mayonnaise) from Cali (originally from Maine, yes Maine) on their first track. I'd dub them as experimental too, but only because they break the stale state of hip-hop into a million pieces. Their flows are smooth and, at times, sound more like spoken word with a lot of soul. The music is sometimes minimalist, sometimes terrorist, but either way it'll grab your head, shake it up and you can only sit there as the snowflakes fall around your eyes. Don't expect Tupac, Snoop or Tribe to have any influence on the sounds you'll hear from this album - this is some of the most original, abstract, and yes, experimental hip-hop around.

Sommerset • *Fast Cars, Slow Guitars* • **Phyte Records** • Actually, you may be disappointed to find that this disc contains neither fast cars, nor slow guitars. It does, however, contain 13 fairly decent punk rock ditties. This is slightly harder than a lot of the pop-punk that's out lately. They definitely have a more rock and roll thing going on.

Son, Ambulance • *Euphemistic* • **Saddle Creek Records** • With a voice somewhere between Adam Duritz of the Counting Crows and The Cure's Robert Smith, Joe Knapp sings/songwrites his way through ten mellow pop songs which juxtapose melancholy and happiness. The band also calls to mind Elvis Costello and Calexico, especially in the flamenco inspired "Maria in Motion."

Soulstance • *Truth, Simplicity & Love* • **Shakti Records** • *Truth, Simplicity*

ity & Love collects into one recording the best tracks from Soulstance's two Italian albums, *Act On!* and *En Route*. Their sound is downtempo, heavily influenced by Brazil's music scene, but make it more funky, more groovy and more mellow at the same time, much like Jazzanova or the *Brazilified* compilation.

Spark Lights the Friction • *L'Homme Robotik* • **Trustkill Records** • Spark Lights the Friction combines layered, polished vocals and screams with post-hardcore guitar riffs in an attempt to disorient the listener with their latest release, *L'Homme Robotik*. Influenced by emo and progressive rock, they breathe new life into a barren musical landscape.

Stormshadow • *Set on Destroy* • **self-released** • Unfortunately, Stormshadow is now broken up. This album, 18 tracks worth, blasts forth with punk/hardcore aggression and commitment as well as skill. The recording is a little rough, but that doesn't interfere with the overall quality of the album, maybe even giving it a better feel for the style of music it is. The vocals are shared between Sue and Matty. They play off each other very well. The music has plenty of tempo changes and creative parts, keeping them from being labeled "just another" punk band. Lyrically, the band offers up highly charged socio/political commentary and protest. At times they remind me of the Dead Kennedys. With each new track, this band impresses me more with their creative sounds. It's a shame they broke up. At a measly \$3ppd for this, you have no excuses.

The Applesseed Cast • *Low Level Owl: Volume 1* • **Deep Elm Records** • *Low Level Owl* finds The Applesseed Cast experimenting with instruments and recording techniques in this first of a two part series. Even though none of the members are keyboard players, nearly all tracks feature either piano or Rhodes or some other kind of keyboard. All the songs bleed together, with some instrumentals adding to the hypnotizing mood that prevails on the album. Personally, I can't wait for Volume 2.

The Blow Up • *True Noise* • **Empty Records** • This is the debut album of The Blow Up, which features ex-Gimmicks, Inhalants and Young Losers members plus a few cameos, notably one by Tim Kerr, who also handles production duties on this Seattle release. It's a fierce 26-minute ride into distortion as art rock. The fact that TBU use machines of their own creation, in an aggressively dizzying sense, forces the listener to play this disc over and over, bringing something new to the table each time.

The Bridge and Tunnel Club • *Songs for Carpetbaggers Come and Gone* • **Effortless Music** • With an unassuming lo-fi sound, The Bridge and Tunnel Club catch you by surprise with their ability to construct good indie rock songs with pop leanings. Scott Sendrow and Marya Sea Kaminski share vocal duties, with Sendrow laid back, deep voice sounding like U2's Edge on the song "Numb." Like Quasi, they mask themes of heartache and sadness under beautiful music.

The Casualties • *Die Hards* • **Side One Dummy Records** • After almost ten years as a punk band, The Casualties are still going on strong. Their latest, *Die Hards*, is just as aggressive as any other. Jorge's vocals are gritty and hurried, with occasional Spanish lyrics. Their street punk sometimes feels like hardcore, with a sound comparable to GBH or the Varukers.

The Dead Leaves Rising • *Waking Up on the Wrong Side of No One* • **Plow City** • A very dramatic and emotional folk rock album for "the slighted, the heartbroken, the jaded." This one-man band displays great guitar work, vocals move along painfully, at times mournful but intriguing. The style on this disc is reminiscent of Leonard Cohen and Johnny Cash, but in a Morrissey kind of way. Lyrics are interesting and keep the listeners attention, most notably within tracks "Fortress" and "The Boy Who Ruined the World."

The Discarded • *I Won't Live A Lie* • **The Legion** • Someone needs to tell the Sex Pistols that they were ripped off and tuned into preachers. This sounds exactly like the Sex Pistols (and they even try to look like 'em). But lyrically, it's about as Christian as they come. Nine out of the ten songs reference "God" and/or "Christ." The lyrics really turn me off, for example: "I won't change, I follow God, You're trapped in your sin, You need a change." Not only is the music incredibly unoriginal, the message is far too preachy and, no pun intended, holier-than-thou. I hope Johnny Rotten kicks their arse.

The Dismemberment Plan • *Change* • **DeSoto Records** • With their fourth full-length release, The Plan shows they are not just a quirky band that had its moment in the sun. While the hype came pre and post their last album (*Emergency & I*), this album proves it's deserved. Showcasing a slightly more matured sound and more melodies than ever before, *Change* will impress even the most snobby music listeners. Their abilities are undeniable. Their sound is experimental, while not being discouraging to the ears. Travis' vocals are varied, used as an instrument in their own right. The musicianship is outstanding and as creative as it

comes, combining funk, soul, indie rock, '60s and '70s rock and, at times, a punk aggressiveness. All the while, the songs shift from dark to bright, never settling for too long. The Plan is most definitely one of the leaders in the independent music scene, not tied down to a genre and flying higher with each new release.

The Firebird Band • *The Drive* • **Cargo Music** • Former Braid guitarist/singer Chris Broach's collaboration with ex-Pilot in Hiatus Andy Howthorne combines guitar driven indie rock with electronic and sometimes experimental beats and synths. Unlike Radiohead's experimentation with electronica, the Firebird Band uses effects as elements for the songs rather than the driving force behind them. Sure to please most, this EP will keep their fans happy until their next full length is released.

The Fireside Project • *These Sounds We Breathe* • **Sinc Studio** • Featured here are five indie rock tunes from the apparently defunct The Fireside Project. All their liner notes are in past tense, leading one to believe they are no more. Bummer, 'cause this is some good stuff. I wish them well in all their future endeavors. The Fireside Project, we hardly knew ye.

The Frisk • *Rank Restraint* • **Adeline Records** • The Frisk hail from the East Bay of California and contain members of AFI, The Criminals and Nerve Agents. I assume they are taking a hiatus from their normal schedule to crank out this more-than-reasonably-priced thrasher. This 8-track CD clocks in at around 20 minutes and shreds all the way thru kinda like Circle Jerks' *Group Sex* minus the political bent. Most noteworthy is the cover of The Clash's 'Know Your Rights' and obvious angst-fave 'Fuck You' which epitomizes this record's intent in about two minutes.

The Honor System • *100% Synthetic EP* • **Double Zero Records** • Do you miss that *Dear You* era of Jawbreaker? While The Honor System doesn't sound exactly like Jawbreaker, that's a reasonable comparison regarding energy, talent and emotion. Translation: This is damn good stuff. It is as good, if not better, than their full-length on Asian Man Records. It's powerful, melodic and sincere in an emotional sense. The music is creative, using smart instrumentation that will keep your ears entertained while the lyrics will impress with their intelligence and skillful writing. These six tracks should hold you over until a new full-length comes out.

The Jive Turkeys • *Sounds from the Idiodysey* • **Derailleur Records** • Personal tastes aside, this album kicks ass. Mixing a little whiskey drinkin' rock n' roll with a heavy dose of trumpet and saxophone, this is white trash at its finest, sarcastic and confident. They've got a bit of everything on this disc, which is led by half-sincere, brash vocals full of slang with a straightforward attitude. Aggressive tracks like "Gun Metal Blues," "Go Back" and "Headstomper" blend well with bluesy "Sugar Daddy" and pimpish tracks like "Talk To Me" and "Month of Sundays." This Columbus, Ohio band describes the album as a "soul-soaked testament to drinking and women and all the problems caused by drinking and women."

The Matics • *Ignition* • **Jettison** • This is the debut CD from a south side Chicago quartet that doesn't skimp on the attitude. They have an energetic, passionate, melodic sound that carries the gritty vocals to a higher level. They're super-fast and super-loud, and definitely on the rock end of the rock-suck spectrum with hundreds of gigahertz to spare.

The Methadones • *Ill At Ease* • **A-F Records** • Not to point out the obvious, but it is remarkable how much the Methadones sound like Green Day. Even the lead singer sounds like Billy Joe with his fake pseudo-British accent. They don't sound bad though. This is melodic punk with harmonies and catchy choruses.

The Microphones • *The Glow, Pt. 2* • **K Records** • If the lo-fi movement is dead in the water, nobody bothered to tell Microphones' mastermind Phil Elvrum. On their fifth full-length album, the Microphones continue to turn out experimental and catchy pop tunes recorded in somebody's bedroom. The varied instrumentation and genre hopping is reminiscent of the Elephant 6 collective and early Sebadoh. Elvrum's entrancing soundscapes prove again that lo-fi does not have to mean low quality.

The Moto-Litas • *For the Greater Good* • **Daemon** • This band has Go-Go's type harmonies and a Joan Jett sense of rock and roll. It's got a strange combination of surf rock thrown in with the edgy, tough female vocals. It's damn good, too - these chickie-poops definitely rock it out. Their sweet backbeats and fierce licks will whale on you.

The Plus Ones/Travoltas • *split CD EP* • **Asian Man Records** • Fans of Mr. T Experience will drool for The Plus Ones, featuring Joel Reader (ex-Mr. T Experience), Scotty Hay and Danny Panic (ex-Screaching Weasel, in his final recording with the band). The three tracks are pop punk through and through, sugary sweet and oh so good to eat. The Travoltas hail from the Netherlands and, like The Plus Ones, offer up pop punk - but there's a lot more punk and a bigger sound as compared to The Plus Ones. Think

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

the Beach Boys meets The Queers. All three of their tracks are excellent. This is a must-have for fans of super melodic, pop punk.

The Poets of Rhythm • Discern/Define • Quantum Projects • Don't be tricked into thinking that this is a re-release of some 1970's funk band. You'd be forgiven if you did, since the music on Discern/Define sounds like it was lifted right out of the era. The way it was recorded suggests "original," which indeed it is. No cover songs here, folks. On this album you'll find 12 no-nonsense, mostly instrumental funk tunes with more than enough griminess to make you feel like it's 1974 again.

The Real McKenzies • Loch'd & Loaded • Honest Don's Records • Many punk bands celebrate their ethnic origins in their music, but none do it like the Real McKenzies. These lads don full Scottish regalia for their shows and feature bagpipes on every song. *Loch'd & Loaded* is a collection of songs for drinking and carousing, including six traditional Scottish songs redone in their street punk style.

The Record Time • Dream in Color Dream in Sound • My Automation Records • This five song EP is the first I've heard of this trio from President W's old home, Austin, Texas. These guys rock out Braid-style with the whole indie punk/emo-ish thing going on. It's good stuff. If it weren't for Austin, I don't know if I'd like anything about Texas.

The Sights • Are You Green • Fall of Rome Records • For this Detroit trio, the sounds of psychedelia are a big influence, as well as pop, rock and blues. "I Can't Stand You" would fit well in a Delta 72 album, with a blistering beat and groovy organs. Harmonies are abundant, and the general vibe is one of a live recording, with all the instruments sounding "warmer" than usual.

The Slash City Daggers • Backstabber Blues • Unity Squad Records • Though their name has changed slightly, their music remains the same brand of street punk in the style of the Stooges or the NY Dolls. They seem to be stuck in a time warp, and don't give a rat's ass. Do you like songs about sex, beer and drugs? Do you like your punk music raw? Then the Slash City Daggers are for you.

The Strugglers • Done By The Strugglers • Brightwell Records • Made up of two primary musicians with a revolving cast of backup players, this album contains an eerie sound as it mixes folk and country. Lyrics and vocals right away have the feel of Bob Dylan and Velvet Underground. There are some good stories in these songs and the album is a comfortable listen. Various instruments are incorporated as well in tracks such as "On the Way to the Grave," keeping the disc original.

The White Octave • Menenergy • Initial Records • You might recognize Stephen Pederson from his last gig with Cursive. As lead singer for the White Octave, he leads the charge with his unstable, high pitched voice. The other musicians complement his unpredictability, with stops and starts, crunching beats and gritty guitars in an indie/emo/post-hardcore style rock. Landspeed record! And The Icarus Line both came to mind when listening to *Menenergy*, which refers to a mysterious force that allows them to make great rock music.

The Witches • Universal Mall • Fall of Rome Records • Take a road trip back to Halloween 1960 with the witches. They love echo, farsafa and other keyboards, and ominous song titles like "Demons All Around Her" and "Devil Made 'Em Run." They sound like a mellow version of the Delta 72 or Mondo Topless crossed with the Forty-Fives.

The Word • self-titled • Ropeadope Records • The Word is a collaboration between John Medeski (from Medeski, Martin and Wood fame), pedal steel guitar great Robert Randolph and the North Mississippi Allstars (Luther and Cody Dickinson and Chris Chew). They came together to celebrate the gospel music played in a branch of the Pentecostal church called the House of God, where the music is as much a part of the service as prayer. Including a few originals as well as old gospel songs, the Word will make you jump out of your seat and yell "Halleluyah!"

theVROOOM • MaMaFoFoFo • self-released • This self-released album is a testament to the indie music scene. You don't need a label or major backing to put out a great album. Here you'll find 17 tracks from theVROOOM, a trio from Phoenix, Arizona. The songs are hook-filled, pop rock gems. Every track is super catchy, dancing all over the place with awesome guitar work, strong bass lines and drumming that doesn't miss a beat. theVROOOM's songs grab you, makes your legs wiggle, your head bob and toes tap. And if you doubt the skills of these three guys, they've got a posse of very attractive women ("theFOOcrew") who act as cheerleaders, of sorts, for the band. Damn, I need to start a band of my own.

They Come In Threes • Blindsided Pt. 1 • Fall of Rome Records • This Detroit band has put together an album that mixes new wave rock and electronic pop with poetic lyrics and loose harmonies. From beginning to

end this disc flows because the musical experimentation feels natural and doesn't sound bad at that. "Lampli" contains a spaced out synth sound on top of a recorded jam session. "Literatourist" stands out as well, but all 10 tracks are great.

They Might Be Giants • Mink Car • Restless Records • If you are thinking to yourself "Wow, I haven't heard from TMGB in years!" you'd be wrong. They have been recording music for TV, films and The Web, most notably the opening theme to *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* and Fox's *Malcolm in the Middle*. *Mink Car* is their first album in five years, and it is as catchy and quirky as any other. Songs like "Bangs" and "Hovering Sombrero" would have perfectly fit on 1990's *Flood*, while "Man, It's So Loud in Here" has an electronic, pseudo New-Wave sound. As always, every song is completely different from the next, yet they all fit together wonderfully. *Mink Car* also features "Another First Kiss," a reworking of a power pop tune into a tender love song.

Thistle • Oxygen EP • Tiberius Records • Thistle is one release away from some mass mainstream recognition, I believe. This four-song EP puts them a bit closer to alt-rock radio territory especially with the title track. I've heard they are a powerhouse of agro-rock live so if this band comes near you, please check them out for yourself. This group is refined enough though they should have had some mid-1990s A&R rep from Interscope knockin' on their door already. Maybe Fred Durst'll pick 'em up, who knows.

Three Years Down • Snakes Bite • D.R.S. • Driving rock 'n roll with a punk-ish attitude and a sound reminiscent of late '80s, early '90s heavy metal and grunge. The majority of guitar solo's come off basic and flashy but the music stays consistent with the intent to rock out. "Cut and Dry" contains a pulsating bass line during moments that give the vocals a chance to stand out. Other than that, the vocals mostly sound drowned out by the music throughout this album.

Thulsa Doom • The Seats Are Soft But The Helmet Is Way Too Tight • This Dark Reign Recordings • From the land of death metal, Norway, comes Thulsa Doom, destroying all in its path with their sludgy, guitar driven heavy doom metal. Their sound is similar to Sons of Otis and Men of Pom, except that they don't sound like they are stoned. The singer has a versatile voice, while the guitar and bass players keep the groove going with plenty of low end.

TJ Rehmi • Invisible Rain • Shakti Records • TJ Rehmi goes all over the place with *Invisible Rain*. His world-infused sound covers drum 'n' bass, breakbeat and downtempo. Though he utilizes traditional Asian and Indian instruments, like Talvin Singh or State of Bengal, they are not the driving force behind the music, and create a nice atmosphere. The title is quite appropriate, since the entire disc evokes a rainy afternoon.

Today is the Day / Metatron • The Descent • This Dark Reign Recordings • This split CD by Today is the Day and Metatron is one fierce recording. TITD starts it off with three songs, two of which are demos of tracks to appear on a forthcoming album. The first, "The Descent," sounds more like a Satanic ritual than a metal song. "The Nailing" follows in the same manner, with more riffs and chords. Finally, "Tabula Rasa" is an eight minute dark ambient tune. Kentucky's Metatron only has two members, but their death metal sound is amazingly robust. Their two songs, "The End of Light" and "Crown of Stars," shake the foundation loose with medium and slow tempos with plenty of rumbling bass lines.

Todd Larry Lloyd • Your Dumb Idea • Unity vs Apathy • This three-piece group put together 9-tracks of garage based "tight-wound" indie/punk rock. The disc sounds underproduced, but that element works well with the sound of this band. Instrumental tracks are included and feature a lot of distorted, noisy guitar and piercing percussion work. Vocals here are lost beneath the instruments, but these guys jam out.

Totally Travis • Totally Travis y Las Marianas • Big Wheel Recreation • Travis Shettel has a successful career in Piebald, but he wanted to make his own record. So he locked himself in a room with some instruments and recorded *Totally Travis y*

Las Marianas by himself on a 4-track. Let me tell you that it sounds nothing like Piebald. The sounds of acoustic guitars are prominent in the songs and some of the songs are humorous. It has an atmosphere of pop, and some of the songs sound a bit like acoustic emo.

Tweaker • The Attraction to All Things Uncertain • Six Degrees Records • Tweaker is a pseudonym used by Chris Vrenna, better known as a former drummer/programmer for Nine Inch Nails. His influence on NIN appears on tracks like "Swamp," where the polished distortion of industrial influenced guitars is complemented by programmed beats and effects. The vast majority of the songs, however, concentrate on establishing bleakness through electronics, with virtually no guitars. To help him express this gloomy view, he enlisted the help of vocalists David Sylvian, Will Oldham and Craig Wedren.

Various Artists • Bombay One • Bombay Records • *Bombay One* is the first collection of tracks culled from Bombay Records' 12" vinyl releases. Bombay specializes in tropical sounding deep house, and this CD includes tracks by Derrick Carter and Chris Nazuka, Kemetic Just, Miguel Graca and Primary Colours. The 12 tracks are mixed together by label founders Nav Bhinder and Patrick Dream. So pop it into your player at your next party and watch those bodies start moving.

Various Artists • Cookin' Ingredients Steps 1 & 2 • Good Looking Records • These two separately available CDs include some wonderful laid back grooves from sister label Cookin' Records. Some of the tracks are from EPs and are available on CD for the first time. Elements of downtempo, drum 'n' bass, bossa nova and jazz are melded together in these records. Step 1's tunes come courtesy of, among others, Artemis, K-Scope, Bjorn, Solaris, Sykes, while Step 2 features Lacamo & Burns, Cedar, Aphratic, Realside and Meeting Minds.

Various Artists • DiY-Fest Compilation Volume 1 • Digital Hardcore Recordings • The DiY-Fest festival was organized for independent mediamaakers to showcase their art, in an environment free from corporate pressure. The resulting event attracted a wide range of musicians, speakers and other artists. The music tracks on the CD include hip hop (Mystic, Hanin Elias), hardcore (Creation is Crucifixion, The Icarus Line), folk (Ani Difranco, White Collar Crime) and digital punk (Dillinger Escape Plan vs. Alec Empire). Spoken Word comes courtesy of Jello Biafra, Matt Pizzolo, Howard Zinn, Nicole Blackman, William Upski Wimsatt, Safiya Asya Bukhari and, in what doesn't really qualify as spoken word, Dr. Ducky Doolittle with a track she calls "Orgasm."

Various Artists • Don't Be Scared: A Fearless Records Sampler • Fearless Records • Instead of compiling 20 or 30 artists with one track each, the latest Fearless Records sampler concentrates on the talents of eight of the bands on its roster. Most of the bands play punk music: Dyanamite Boy, Glassteater, Junction 18, Bigwig, Lonely Kings and 30 Foot Fall. The other two bands are the magnificent At The Drive In and the hilarious Aquabats. Not only do you get to really sample a band, with at least three songs by each one, but all except the Aquabats contribute a previously unreleased song.

Various Artists • Earth 5 • Good Looking Records • Fifth in an ongoing series, *Earth 5* features 12 brand new and exclusive tracks compiled by label founder and drum 'n' bass maestro LTJ Bukem. The lazy beats of this downtempo comp will carry you into bliss previously unknown by mere mortals. Up to the task of providing laid back jazzy enjoyment are Big Bud, Rebirth of Conscience, PFM, Amalgamation of Soundz and Makoto, among others.



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Various Artists • For Those Who Stand: A Gay Rights Compilation • Tear It Down Records • The title of this CD pretty much sums up the motivation for the compilation, which includes some of the best bands out there in the punk/hardcore genres. Bands like AFI, Refused, Boy Sets Fire, Good Riddance, Elliot and the (International) Noise Conspiracy, just to name a few. The liner notes are very cool, with information about each band, as well as lyrics for some of the songs.

Various Artists • Giant Step Records Sessions Vol. 1 • Giant Step Records • This compilation of songs was mixed by Ron Trent, the main DJ at New York City's Giant Step nights at club Shine. Jazz, afrobeat, disco and soul are all represented by Trent's skillful mixing of tracks by Hipnotic, Jiva, Carl Hancock Rux, Donnie and others. Almost all the tracks were gathered from vinyl only releases, and the rest were available only in other countries.

Various Artists • Lush Life Electronica • Quango / Palm Pictures Records • Quango continues to release downtempo electronica compilations, this one mixed by London DJ Pete Herbert. Included are tracks by international musicians such as John Beltram, CIM, Soul Circuit, Bochum Welt and Pub. Slow, soothing beats are mixed with melodic, playful keyboard effects for an atmospheric, groovy sound.

Various Artists • New Disorder Soda • New Disorder Records • This compilation features 25 tracks of underground punk, hardcore and rock out of San Francisco. The opening song by What Happens Next? starts things out with a fury and a lot of bands are really impressive here. The notable stand-outs include Midnight Laser Beam, Sacrificious, The Lab Rats, The Sidekicks, Nicky Darger, Harbinger, Dory Tourette and the Skirtheads, Green Light Go, Pinx the Pilot, and Los Rabbis.

Various Artists • Plea For Peace Take Action • Sub City • This may very well be the best punk rock compilation in the last few years. More than half of the 28 tracks are rare, unreleased or live. Proceeds from the CD benefit the National Hopeline Network, providing 24-hour youth crisis assistance. The album is a companion to the Plea For Peace/Take Action Tour featuring several of the bands featured here. Some of the most notable on this release include Alkaline Trio, Hot Water Music, AFI, Lawrence Arms, Thursday, At The Drive-In, Boy Sets Fire, Grade, Good Riddance, Strike Anywhere and loads more. This record spans the punk spectrum, from pop punk to hardcore to indie rock.

Various Artists • Punk Rocker • Initial Records • This CD was originally sent for free to over 9,000 people who receive Initial Records' mail order catalog. The subsequent demand for it was so great that they decided to release it as a bona fide record. There are 25 tracks of hardcore, emo and punk from some of the finest bands out there, including Boy Sets Fire, Dillinger Escape Plan, The Get Up Kids, Hot Water Music, The Jazz June and Tom Apart.

Various Artists • Snoisses Vol. 1 • Sessions Records • This is Sessions Records' first sampler, featuring all the artists currently on their label, including Sloe, The Missing 23rd, Hopelifter, Mock and Downway. Punk, hardcore and indie rock rule at Sessions, and the comp shows it. Some tracks have never been released, or came from hard to get or out of print recordings. Snatch one up before they are all gone.

Various Artists • Space Jazz • Quango / Palm Pictures Records • Quango's latest compilation explores the smoothness of downtempo electronica. Trip-hop and jazz are melded together by artists like Tosca (which features Richard Dorfmeister of Kruder & Dorfmeister fame), Love TKO, Horsemilk, Solid Doctor, Milk Katie and others. The lush soundscapes created by layered keyboards and slow-tempo beats are perfect for chilling out at the end of a long night of clubbing.

Various Artists • Suite 706 • Milan Records • MTV France host Jacky Jayet put together this compilation of downtempo electronica to give the rest of the world a taste of what goes on at Suite 706 at the Hyatt Madeleine in Paris. I have to imagine that what goes on there is a lot of lovemaking, because that is what I wanted to do while I listened to this CD. With tracks by Grand Tourism, Lustral, Space Raiders, Chicane, BDF, Urban Species and others, the mood is right for love, baby.

Various Artists • The Embryo Compilation: 03 Adventures in Home-made Music • Cubby Control • A great compilation with 19 tracks of some very strange, experimental indie rock from San Francisco. The opening track from Shackleton is a great introduction to "9a.m." by Dax, a lil' ditty that will surely trip you out. "In 3" by Dahu is a track using samplers, guitar synth and bass layered with female vocal harmonies. The feel of the disc goes from musical highs to lows. What's important here is how well the disc is packaged. Tracks blend well together without sounding the same, as different styles are showcased and worth the listen. Other hotspots come from, but are not limited to, the likes of Brian Weaver, The Cubby Creatures, [minmae] and Mr. Fantastic.

Various Artists • This Changes Everything: A Second Nature Recordings Sampler • Second Nature Recordings • Since 1995, Second Nature Recordings has been releasing music by some of the best hardcore/emo/indie bands out there. Their love for good music, regardless of genre, is evident on this comp. While The Higher Burning Fire serenades listeners on the previously unreleased "Aren't All Parades Free?", Coalesce destroys them on "Measured in Gray." Other artists included here are Kid Kilowatt, The Casket Lottery, Eulcid, Waxwing, Anarasca, and The Blood Brothers.

Various Artists • Too Legit for the Pit: Hardcore Takes the Rap • Radical Records • Given the by-now-overdone blending of metal and rap, this compilation is anything but original. Hardcore and otherwise heavy music bands cover rap hits from the '80s. What was surprising, however, was the fact that some of these guys are pretty good MCs. Candiria's version of "Deep Cover" and Skarhead's take on "P.S.K! What Does It Mean?" incorporate fluid rhymes. On the other hand, Diehard Youth rips through "Bust A Move" as if they just learned of the song's existence the day of recording. True to the hardcore sound are the Hoods, with a barely recognizable cover of "Mama Said Knock You Out." Though this CD is mostly hit-or-miss, at least it might prod you into digging out the originals.

Various Artists • United DJs of America Vol. 18 • DMC/Razor & Tie Records • Tony Humphries is legendary for his club nights at New Jersey's Club Zanzibar, where he played what later became known as Garage, characterized by its house beats and soulful, mostly female vocals. He continues to play it, most recently on *United DJs of America Vol. 18*, where he mixes 70 minutes of tracks by Applefunk, Viola, Stephanie Cook and Alliance DC, among others.

Various Artists • United DJs of America Vol. 19 • DMC/Razor & Tie Records • For volume 19 in the *United DJs of America*, John Kelley mans the decks, spinning high energy tech-house infused with tribal beats, a sound known as West Coast Desert House. Kelley never drops the beat with tracks from Freak Project, Hatiras, X-Press 2, Angel Alanis and others.

Victor Davies • self-titled • Jazzanova Compost Records • Victor Davies must get laid all the time. His self-titled debut is an oh-so-smooth blend of light jazz, soul and Latin rhythms that surely makes the ladies swoon. His affinity for Brazilian sounds is apparent in songs like "Sounds of the Samba" and "Spirit," with their carefree attitude and a voice similar to Seal's. This is the perfect album for summer, as it turns to fall.

Visitor Jim • Visitor Jim • Fortune Records • Visitor Jim is the latest project from Bay Area songwriting machine Jim Greer. The versatile Greer has recruited two fellow Jim's for this set of well-crafted pop/rock tunes. Catchy hooks and smart lyrics abound on *Visitor Jim*, which builds upon classic rock structure and style to create a highly enjoyable modern rock album. This is another great release from Fortune Records.

Willie Heath Neal & His Cowboy Killers • self-titled • Cargo/Headhunter • This is country, through and through. He croons as well as the best of them and the jangly music contains plenty of backwoods rhythms. You can feast your ears on some great guitar-work as you get absorbed in the fun-filled attitude this album generates.

Vinyl releases

69 a Go Go • New Flava 7" • With an X • This band has been around since '98, offering up their brand of rock 'n' roll that takes heavily from '77 punk world. The end result is solid, energized music that lends itself to a great live sound. Both tracks on this release have awesome sound quality and are strong examples of what 69 a Go Go has to offer.

Captain Sensible • Smash It Up (Parts 1-4) 7" • NDN Records • In 1979, Damned bassist Captain Sensible wrote "Smash It Up," but it was only released as a two-parter, instead of in its intended four parts. This 7" features all four parts, remastered from Sensible's actual 1979 demo tape. Side B includes two never before released songs from that time, "The Cow" and "Singalongsensible," plus "Love Song," the Damned's first top ever 20 hit.

[minmae] • I'd Like to Apologize for Last Night 7" • Airborne Virus Records • On one side of this 7" is "Universal Excuse Movement," a layered, hypnotic instrumental with repeating layers of guitars, similar to the work of Physics. Side B's "F Being a Constant" is more structured, although just as repetitive, with three verses mumbled in the last 30 seconds. Finally, "The Man Who Fought for Speed" is more of an indie rock tune, with acoustic guitars and a mid tempo beat. The singing is melodic and layered on top of itself.

[minmae] feat. ONQ • Bound to the Whips of the Aeronautical Fatwa 7"

• Dhyan Records • These two bands managed to fit ten tracks into this 7". Actually, the whole thing sounds like one song with ten different sections. From "Sportlike's" old New Order feel, to "She's Being a Beatle's" techno-ish beat, all tracks sound somewhat muddy and raw, which only adds to their appeal. Side B leans is less experimental, but the hypnotic effect remains.

Pilot to Gunner • self-titled 7" • SINAudio • This includes two tracks that are also on Pilot to Gunner's full-length (and downright amazing) CD *Games at High Speeds*. (If you haven't heard that album, the band's style takes aspects from such bands as Jawbox, Modest Mouse and Braid, fusing it into a sound all their own.) "It's So Good To Be Here In Paris" and "Bring It Live" are both excellent songs. I wish they were songs not included on the album, though. However, the see-thru orange vinyl is a nice touch. Fans of Pilot to Gunner might want to grab this just for the collector aspect.

Stevie & The Secrets • Gimme a Call 7" • With an X • Rock 'n' roll is what Stevie & The Secrets is all about. There are two songs on this slab and both are about as rock 'n' roll as you can get, crunchy guitars and strong vocals included. I'm sure there's a lot of beer involved in the creation of this stuff.

The Damned • Ignite 7" • NDN Records • This 7" was recorded live in France in 1994, and includes five classic Damned tracks: "Ignite," "Gun Fury," "Neat Neat Neat," "Love Song" and a cover of the Hawaii 5-0 TV show theme. While the Damned lineup has varied over the years, this current one handles the songs with ease. Just the never before seen artwork by longtime Damned collaborator Michael Beal makes this 7" worthwhile.

The Disaster • With Years Left To Go 7" • Endwell Records • This release showcases eight (yes, eight) songs by Rochester, NY quartet The Disaster. The pace is rapid, moving forward quickly, with melody and intensity. There's a bit of an old school, skate-punk feel but the overall sound is definitely current, reminiscent at times of such bands as Strike Anywhere and Lifetime. The lyrics are strong, as well, focusing on social issues such as corporate wealth and degrading language (i.e. bitch, faggot). This is a strong release with plenty of "bang for your buck."

The Dripping Lips • Such A Lot Of Stars 7" • NDN Records • Featuring Brian James (the Damned) on guitar, this four track release includes a new (and improved) version of "Such A Lot Of Stars" that is super catchy. Rock is the best overall way to describe this release. The music is also a little dark and at times garage-y. Brian James' bandmates include Nico Mansy (bass, ex-Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds) and Paul Zahl (drums, ex-Flamin' Groovies).

Video releases

Dead Kennedys • The Early Years Live • Decay Music • This is a rare look at the punk rock legends live and in concert. The 30-minute long video (also available on DVD) features nine songs including "California Uber Alles," "The Man With The Dogs," "Holiday In Cambodia" and more - all spanning 1978-1981. It also features footage from Jello's mayoral campaign in San Francisco. While the quality isn't superb, it's definitely above average for such old and hard-to-find film. It's a great opportunity to see one of the most influential and socially-aware punk bands of the early '80s.

New Order • Taras Shevchenko • Cherry Red Films • This 53-minute video contains footage of New Order's first U.S. tour, live at the Ukrainian National Home in New York City on November 18, 1981. It features nine songs, including fantastic performances of "Temptation" and "Ceremony." (Other tracks performed include "Everything's Gone Green," "ICB" and "Truth.") The sound quality is very good and New Order infuses a high level of intensity into each song. There are at least three different cameras used, so there are varied angles and the quality of the film is a strong point, especially given the footage is over 20 years old. The video begins with an artsy, silent, three-minute intro. I could have done without it, but that's what "fast-forward" is for. This is a must have for fans of New Order and the early New Wave/punk movement.

Rage • 20 Years of West Coast Punk Rock • Classified Films • With such greats as Keith Morris (Circle Jerks), Jack Grisham (T.S.O.L.) and Jello Biafra (Dead Kennedys) featured, I thought this was going to be a fantastic film. I was very disappointed. It's presented as a documentary, using recent interviews with punk legends to tell the history of the West Coast punk scene. Unfortunately, most of those interviewed (Jello excluded) give uninteresting, curse-filled rants about their experiences (many of them seeming quite bitter). While it does tell the story of the scene, it does it in a long-winded way. This film would have been much better if there was more live footage of the bands of that scene (including the Weirdos, Germs, Circle Jerks, etc.), and less chatter from the aging punk rockers.

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

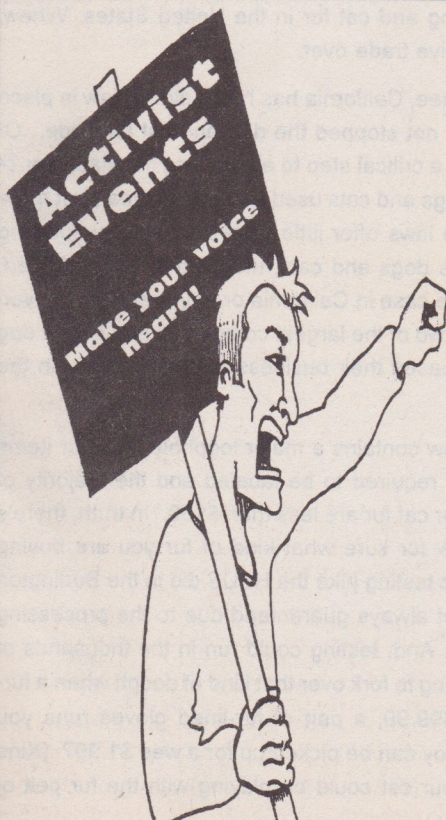
Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

Adeline Records, 5337 College Ave. #318, Oakland, CA 94618
A-F Records, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Airborne Virus Records, PO Box 16207, San Diego, CA 92176
Allegory Recs, PMB 228, 11024 Montgomery NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111
Alveran Records, Box 100152, 44707 Bochum, Germany
Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585
Barsuk Records, PO Box 22546, Seattle, WA 98122
Benzoleene, c/o Jaime Graser, 1650 Lemar Dr., Wooster, OH 44691
Better Looking Recs, 11401 Santa Monica Blvd. #302, LA, CA 90025
Big Dada, c/o Ninja Tune, PO Box 4296, London, SE11 4WW, UK
Big Wheel Recreation, 325 Huntington Avenue #24, Boston, MA 02115
Billy Likes Records, PO Box 10781, Rochester, NY 14610-0781
Bombay, 3575 boul. St-Laurent ste., 314 Montreal, QC, Canada H2X 2T7
Brightwell Records, PO Box 250539, New York, NY 10025
BSI Records, 4005 SE 28th Ave., Portland, OR 97202
Burnt Toast Vinyl, PO Box 42188, Philadelphia, PA 19101
Cargo Music, 4901 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432
Casa Recording Co., 4509 Interlake Ave. N # 305, Seattle, WA 98133
Cherry Red Films, c/o MVD, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456
Classified Films, c/o MVD, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456
Conquer the World Records, PO Box 40282, Redford, MI 48240
Constellation Records, PO Box 42002, Montreal, Canada H2W 2T3
Cubby Control, 1172 Florida Street, San Francisco, CA 94110
D.R.S., PO Box 2348, El Cerrito, CA 94530
Daemon Records, PO Box 1207, Decatur, GA 30031
Deadline, PMB 251, 13428 Maxella Ave., Marina Del Rey, CA 90292
Decay Music, c/o Music Video Distributors, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456
Deep Elm Records, PO Box 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236
Derailleur Records, PO Box 10276, Columbus, OH 43201
DeSoto Records, PO Box 60932, Washington, DC 20039
Dhyana Records, Rosenaustr 16, 86150 Augsburg, Germany
Digital Hardcore Recordings, 231 East 5th Street #A, New York, NY 10003
Dischord, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007
Doghouse, PO Box 8946 Toledo, OH 43623
Dogprint Records, PO Box 2120, Teaneck, NJ 07666
Domingo, PMB 221, 4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, OR 97214-5246
Domino Recording Company, PO Box 4029, London, SW15 2XR
Double Zero Records, PO Box 7122, Algonquin, IL 60102
Eighteenth St Lounge, 1210 18th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
Empty Records, PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102

Endwell Records, 19 Stori Road, Newburgh, NY 12550
Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534
Eulogy Recordings, Box 8692, Coral Springs, FL 35075
Excelsior Recordings, Prince St. Station, PO Box 388, NY, NY 10012
Fall of Rome Records, PO Box 69431, Los Angeles, CA 90069
Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119
Fearless Records, 13772 Goldenwest St. #545, Westminster, CA 92683
Fortune Records, PO Box 11302, Berkeley, CA 94712
Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604
Gelatinous Productions, 1402 N. Euclid, Indianapolis, IN 46201
Geographic Records, PO Box 549, Glasgow G12 9NQ, Scotland
Giant Step Records, 62 White St., Suite 3R, New York, NY 10013
Gold Standard Laboratories, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
Good Looking Records, 84 Queens Road, Watford Herts, WD17 2LA
Googol Press, 1959 Foxhall Loop, San Jose, CA 95125
Gunboat, c/o Dan Wilder, Apt. 2L, 147 Columbia St., Cambridge, MA, 02140
Hellcat Records, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026
Honest Don's Records, PO Box 192027, San Francisco, CA 94119
Hopsing, 2389 Fairgreen Ave., Deltona, FL 32738
In Music We Trust, 15213 SE Bevington Avenue, Portland, OR 97267
Initial Records, PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217
Jade Tree, 2310 Kennyswinn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810
Jazzanova Compost Records, Haager Str. 10 81671 München
Jettison Music, 6008 S. Harlem Ave., Summit, IL 60501
Join the Team Player Recs, Alltöttingerstr. 6a, 81673 München, Germany
K Records, PO Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507
Kick Save Records, PO Box 404, Appleton, WI 54912-0404
Kung Fu Records, PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038
Lotus Records, 13414 SW 111th Terrace, Miami, FL 33186
Mantra Recordings, 580 Broadway Suite 1004, New York, NY 10012
Merge Records, PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Milan Records, 8750 Wilshire Blvd. 3rd Floor, Beverly Hills, CA 90211
Musclestone Recs, 8949 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 203, W. Hollywood, CA 90069
Mush Records, 902 N Winchester Chicago, IL 60622
My Automation Records, 1419 Sugar Creek Blvd., Sugarland, TX 77478
NDN Records, PO Box 131471, The Woodlands, TX 77393-1471
New Disorder Records, 115 Bartlett St., San Francisco, CA 94110
Nikazone Records, PO Box 1654, Wooster, OH 44691
Ninja Tune Recs, 1751 Richardson #4501, Montreal, Canada H3K 1G6
NorthernBlues, 67 Mowat Ave., Ste. 233, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3E3 Canada
Not Bad Records, PO Box 2014, Arvada, CO 80001
Out Of Step Records, Box 509, Vineburg, CA 95487
OuZel Records, v. Moro 13, 19020 Prati (SP), Italy
Owned and Operated, PO Box 36, Ft. Collins, Colorado, 80522

Paul Reddick, 52 Beach View Cres., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4E-2L5
Phyte Records, PO Box 90363, Washington, D.C. 20090
Pilot Round the Sun, 105 N. Darlington St., West Chester, PA 19380
Plow City Record Company, PO Box 1604, Moline, IL 61266-1604
Polyvinyl Record Co., PO Box 1885, Danville, IL 61834-1885
Pop Culture Recs, 7326 Rideau Valley Dr., Kars, Ontario, K0A2E0, Canada
Punks Before Profits, PO Box 57, Olean, NY 14760
Quango / Palm Pictures, 4 Columbus Ave., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10019
Quannum Projects, 465A South Van Ness, San Francisco, CA 94103
Radical Records, 77 Bleecker St. #C2-21, New York, NY 10012
Razor & Tie Entertainment, PO Box 585, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276
Rephlex Records, PO Box 2676, London, N11 1AZ, England
Restless Records, 1901 S. Bundy Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90025
Ropeadope Records, Village Station, PO Box 1021, NY, NY 10014-1021
Ross and the Hellpits, 3552 SE Washington St., Portland, OR 97214
Saddle Creek Records, PO Box 8554, Omaha, NE 68108-0554
Sanbox, PO Box 397, Piscataway, NJ 08854
Second Nature Recordings, PO Box 11543 Kansas City, MO 64138
Sessions Records, 15 Janis Way, Scotts Valley, CA 95066
Shadowstorm, c/o M. Crawford, 414 N. Oaks Blvd., N. Brunswick, NJ 08902
Shakti Records, 4650 North Port Washington Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53212
Shiretown Records, PO Box 238, East Randolph, VT 05041
Side One Dummy, 6201 Sunset Blvd. Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028
SINAudio, 376 3rd Street, Apt. #3, Brooklyn, NY 11215
Six Degrees Records, PO Box 411347, San Francisco, CA 94141-1347
Smorgasbord Records, PO Box 5392, Milford, CT 06460
Soleilmoon Recordings, PO Box 83296, Portland, OR 97283
SpinART Records, PO Box 1798, New York, NY 10156-1798
Sub City, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
Tape Mountain, 1803 SE Washington #2, Portland, OR 97214
Tear It Down Records, PO Box 230722, Encinitas, CA 92023-0722
The Legion, 11023 NE Gilsan St., Portland, OR 97220
The Music Fellowship, PO Box 9325, New Haven, CT 06533
theVROOOM, c/o B. Horner, 4013 West Villa Linda, Glendale, AZ 85310
This Dark Reign Recordings, PO Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853
Tiberius Records, 4280 Catalpa Drive, Independence, KY 41051
Troubleman Unlimited, 16 Willow St., Bayonne, NJ 07002
Trustkill Records, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724
Ubiquity Records, PO Box 192104, San Francisco, CA 94119
Ultra Records, 588 Broadway, Suite 1003, New York, NY 10012
Unity Squad Records, PO Box 1235, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
Unity vs Apathy, 418 Mason St., Morrisville, NY 12962
Velocette Records, 83 Walton St., Atlanta, GA 30303
Victory Records, PO Box 146546, Chicago, IL 60614
With an X, 66 Hope Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211



Transform Columbus Day

When: October 5-8, 2001
Where: Denver, CO
Info: www.transformcolumbusday.org

6th Annual Boston Vegetarian Food Fest

When: October 13, 2001
Where: Reggie Lewis Athletic Center
Info: www.bostonveg.org/foodfest/

Protest: Stop the Militarization of Space

When: October 13, 2001
Where: Internationally
Info: www.globenet.free-online.co.uk

Protest Stephens Inc.'s Support of Huntingdon Life Sciences' animal testing

When: October 27 -29th, 2001
Where: Stephens Inc., Little Rock, AR
Info: www.shacusa.net

Black Panther Party 35th Year Reunion and Conference

When: October 11-14, 2001
Where: Howard Univ, Law School, DC
Info: www.itsabouttimebpp.com

Faith in Action on the Death Penalty

When: October 12-14, 2001
Where: nationwide
Info: www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/faithinaction.html

Stop Police Brutality

When: October 22, 2001
Where: nationwide
Info: www.october22.org

14th Annual Creating Change -- Gathering of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender political movement

When: November 7-11, 2001
Where: Hyatt Regency, Milwaukee, WI
Info: www.creatingchange.org

School of the Americas Protest

When: November 16-18, 2001
Where: Ft. Benning, Georgia
Info: www.soaw.org/

Advocates for Youth's 20th Anniversary Conference

When: December 2 - 4, 2001
Where: Wyndham Hotel, Wash. DC
Info: www.advocatesforyouth.org

Want to get an event listed? COOL. Email us: editor@impactpress.com

The Truth Behind the Fur Trade

You could easily be buying products made with dog or cat fur, using child labor, and not even know it.

By Sharie Lesniak

Do we really have the freedom to buy whatever we want if no one will tell us the truth about what they are selling? Imagine that you're shopping for a winter coat. You pick out a navy parka you like and it has a label that reads:

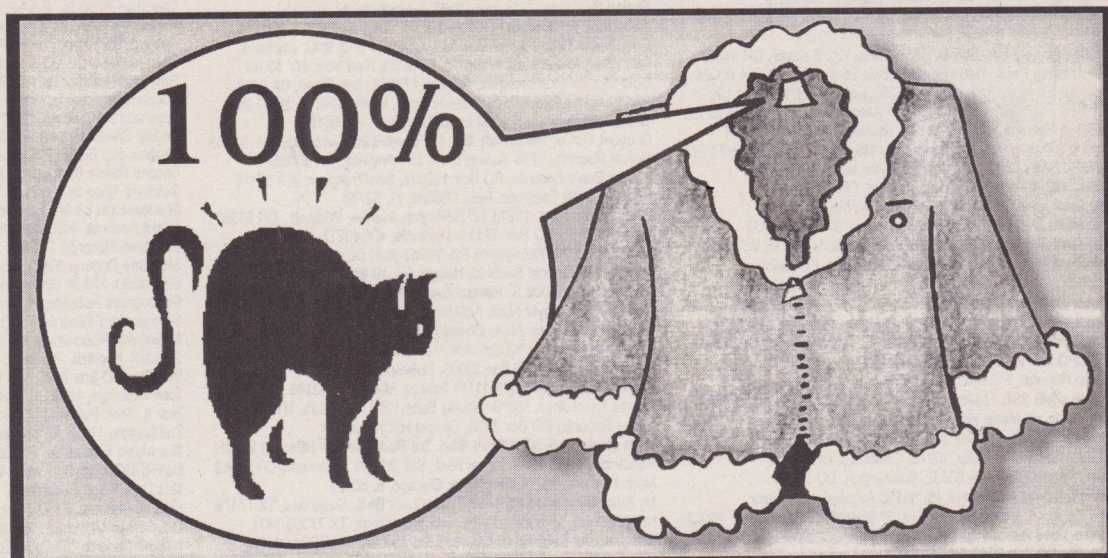
Shell: 65% polyester
35% cotton
Lining: 100% cotton
Trim: coyote fur

It looks and fits great, so you purchase it. A few months later you discover the label did not divulge the truth. Much to your horror, the coat you have been wearing is made with fur from a domestic dog!

This actually happened in the U.S. The Burlington Coat Factory ordered a few hundred parkas that they thought were trimmed with coyote fur. But much to their PR department's chagrin, DNA testing ordered by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), revealed that they had received, and were selling, coats that were trimmed with the fur from some of our best friends: our dogs. So, if labels lie and stores don't even know what they're selling, how can we know what we're buying?

The simple truth is, we can't and—even though they'd like to think they can—neither can the stores. Take a nice pair of fur-lined gloves, for example. The label says "genuine fur" and that's the truth — but only part of it. This pair of gloves was made from the genuine fur of a pair of domestic cats that were strangled to death by a child, barely 10 years old. Without this crucial information, like what the product is made of and how it is made, we become easy targets for deception, ultimately being tricked into buying and supporting things we do not want. (And in case you were wondering, "made with child labor" is not on the label, but has been documented to be taking place in the fur trade).

In 1998, when Burlington Coat Factory quickly pulled the remaining dog-fur parkas from the racks and recalled another 140 that unsuspecting consumers were wearing, only a few people in the media raised their eyes. This time it was Congress who was paying better attention. With a unanimous vote in the House and an



art by eachean

overwhelming majority in the Senate, Congress enacted the Dog and Cat Protection Act of 2000. President Clinton signed the Act into law on November 13, 2000, making it a federal crime to import, export, or sell dog and cat fur in the United States. Whew, disgusting and deceptive trade over.

Wishful thinking. You see, California has had a similar law in place since 1973, but it has not stopped the dog and cat fur trade. Of course these laws are a critical step to eliminating the slaughter of the over two million dogs and cats used for fur each year, but flaws still exist. First, these laws offer little protection to unsuspecting consumers, as well as dogs and cats, unless they are enforced, which has not been the case in California or anywhere else. Even with the ban in place, two of the largest companies that import dog and cat fur have increased their business and are located in the state of California!

Second, the federal law contains a major loophole: only fur items valued over \$150 are required to be labeled and the majority of items made with dog or cat fur are less than \$150. In truth, there's really no way to know for sure what kind of fur you are buying because even forensic testing (like the HSUS did in the Burlington dog-fur incident) is not always guaranteed due to the processing and dying done to fur. And, testing could run in the thousands of dollars! Now who's going to fork over that kind of dough when a fur-trimmed coat costs \$99.99, a pair of fur-lined gloves runs you \$29.99, and a fur cat toy can be picked up for a wee \$1.99? (Kind of sadly ironic that your cat could be playing with the fur pelt of someone's lost puppy.)

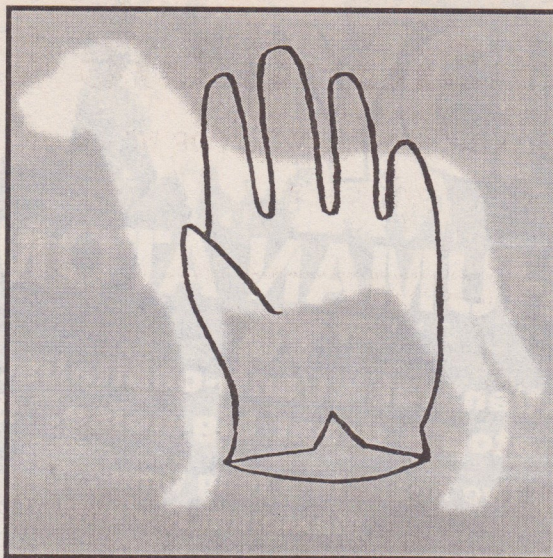
You see, there really is no way to know how many products made with dog and cat are in stores throughout the U.S. and Europe—the two biggest markets for dog and cat fur. So with state and federal bans that are little more than a first step, Burlington Coat Factory and many other stores have no problem continuing to sell fur even when they can't know what type of animal fur they are selling.

But really, besides trappers, fur ranchers, and retailers, there can't be anyone out there who doesn't understand that the pain and suffering of *any* fur-bearing animal is horrendous and—especially in the case of fur—is totally, 100% unnecessary! (Of course, one might argue that there's more pain and suffering involved when the dog or cat slaughtered for their fur was actually someone's companion animal and family member.)

Companion animals who are stolen or inadvertently killed in traps are also things the fur industry doesn't want the unassuming public to know about. Of course, if you've lived through the '80s, when red paint was tossed on anyone wearing a fur coat, you probably know most of the other ways the fur industry has tried to pull the fur over our eyes for years. There's the one about "ranch-raised" animals actually being cared for. And the one about humane traps (that leave animals languishing for days, where one out of every four trapped animals escapes by chewing off his or her own foot only to die later, and thousands of dogs, cats, raptors, and other animals are crippled or killed by the indiscriminate devices). And one can't forget about the unregulated but supposedly "humane" ways fur animals are murdered. These are all industry fabrications.

The fact that a recent Harris Poll revealed that 72% of Americans surveyed said they would prefer to wear a coat made with man-made fur rather than a coat made from animal fur leads one to believe that retailers are the ones still in the dark about the cruelty of fur. There can be no doubt that big business (like huge department stores), special interest groups (like the fur industry, ranchers, and trappers), and the media (aside from a handful that have tackled this issue), are still willing to put profits before consumers—and compassion! Buying fur seems to be just like buying cigarettes (until recently). We are only free to buy half-truths—if even that.

Given all this, it's hard to believe that the biggest rallying cry for consumers to rise up would come from none other than Monroe Milstein, chairman and CEO of the Burlington Coat Factory. When asked why his stores still continue to sell fur even though he can't



You see, there really is no way to know how many products made with dog and cat are in stores throughout the U.S. and Europe — the two biggest markets for dog and cat fur.

know what type of fur he is selling, he replied, "As soon as the department stores stop selling fur-trim garments, we will. The public is our boss." OK Jane and John Q. Public, are you listening? Isn't it time we stood up for ourselves? Let's see who's really the boss of who. Is it we, the people, who are really in charge? Or is it big business, special interest groups and the media? "How can we find out?" Easy. We ask our cities to stop the sale of all fur. Or put it on the ballot and vote on it! Actually, this might be one of the few times government will be on the people's side, since ending the sale of all fur is the only way they can enforce the federal and state bans on dog and cat fur. Besides, this idea is not new or radical; it's simply a way for the people to be heard for a change, just like Milstein said.

This is also a cry for a more compassionate world, in addition to fighting for freedom from big business, spe-

cial interest groups and the media shoving their ideas of what is fashionable, humane, and best for us down our throats. Consumers must stop listening to the lies and start waking up to the truth—even if it is horrible. As horrible as what undercover HSUS investigators saw when they witnessed a dog, barely a year old and chained to a fence, wagging his tail as his killer approached. The killer plunged his knife into the dog's groin and then proceeded to skin the dog for his fur, while investigators watched his eyes blink, because he was still very much alive.

Arguing against a hunting and trapping initiative in Minnesota, Richard Gist so eloquently stated: "[c]ompassion struggles, always. Indifference brushes it aside, selfish pursuit forces it on the defensive. When cruelty is given free reign, compassion becomes muted, even derided." Let's stop this from happening. Let's stand up and get rid of the cruel, deceptive, and outdated fur industry entirely! ♪

Make an IMPACT

Animal Protection Institute
<http://www.api4animals.org/>

Animal Nation
<http://www.animalnation.net>

PETA: Fur Is Dead
<http://www.furisdead.com>

Coalition to Abolish the Fur Trade
<http://www.banfur.com>

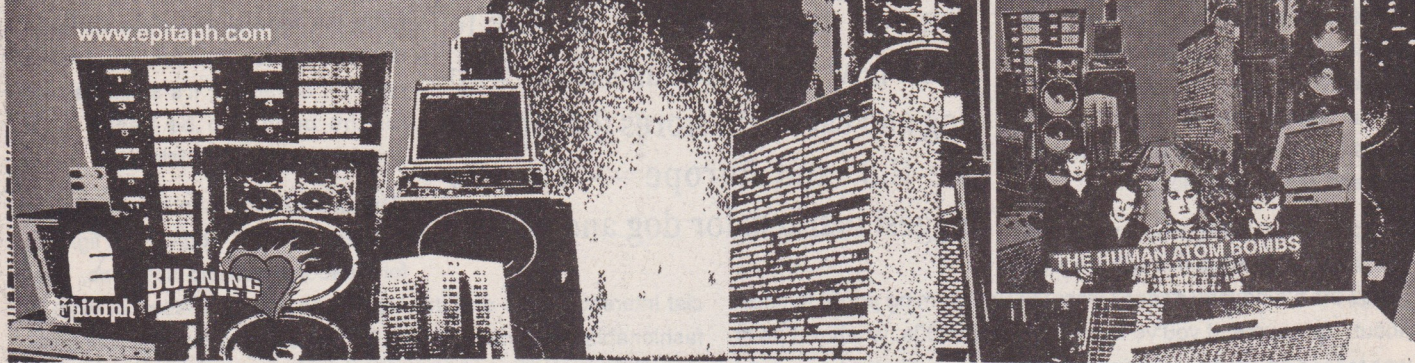
RANDY

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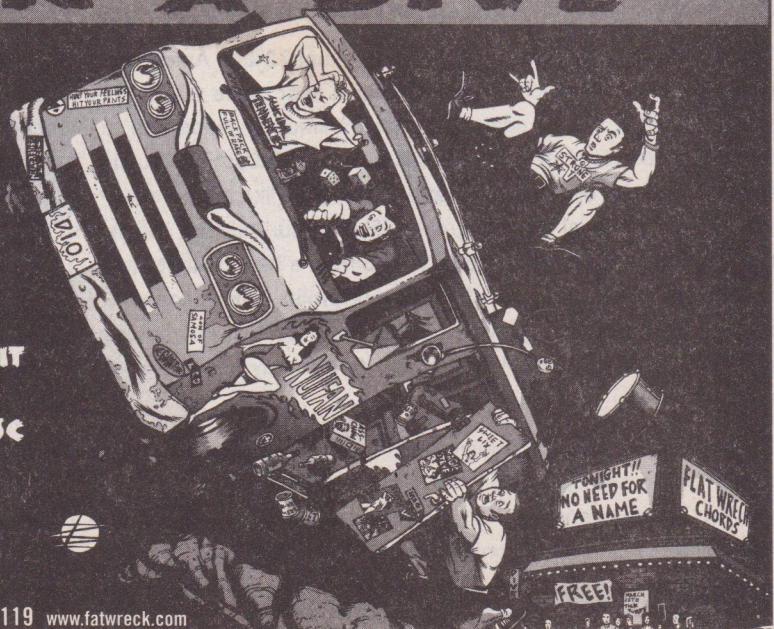
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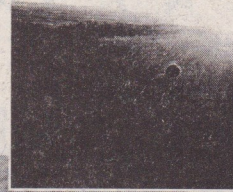
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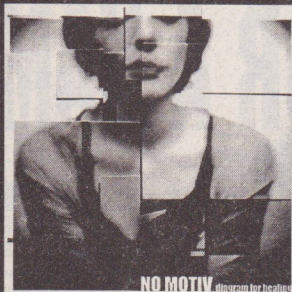


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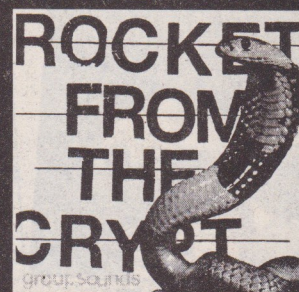
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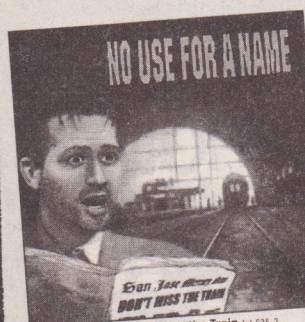
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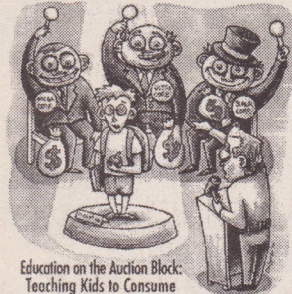
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Back Issues

IMPACT



Education on the Auction Block:
Teaching Kids to Consume

Gestations Crates: No Way To Treat a Pig
America's Wealth Gap
America's Greatest Enemy: The
Bloated Military Budget
Dissolving Bones and Cancer: The Chemical Industry Exposed

issue #34

Issue #34, August/September '01, Cover Story: Education on the Auction Blocks - Teaching Kids to Consume -- Gestations Crates - No Way to Treat a Pig; Across the Great Divide - America's Wealth Gap

Issue #33, June/July '01, Cover Story: Dissolving Bones and Cancer - The Chemical Industry Exposed -- Dinosaur Fuel Becomes a Dinosaur; Fish Are Not Swimming Vegetables

Issue #32, April/May '01, Cover Story: Downed Animals - Diseased Food On Your Plate -- Also: Was It the Falun Gong or Chinese Deception?; Selling Our Environment for a Barrel Oil; Educational Equality

Issue #31, February/March '01, Cover Story: Ripe for Revolt - Building a New Left -- Also: Global Warming Heats Up and U.S. Runs From Kitchen; Pigs at the Trough - The Corporate Welfare State in America

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Issue #29, October/November '00, Cover Story: Attacking America's Greatest Enemy - The Bloated Military Budget -- Also: Vaccine Conspiracy - Health of Profit?

Issue #28, August/September '00, Cover Story: Genetic Engineering - What's In It For Me and You? -- Also: The Deadly Truth Behind Greyhound Racing; The Spaceman Cometh - Corporate Rule & Control

Issue #27, June/July '00, Cover Story: Truth on Trial - Why Capital Punishment Deserves to Die -- Also: A Political Solution to Medical Errors; Unholy Alliance - The CIA and Fascist Terrorists

Issue #26, April/May '00, Cover Story: Censorship, Alive and Well in the U.S. -- Also: Rape Shield Laws - Who Needs Protecting?; Antisocial Security: Your Personal Info Is At Risk

Issue #25, February/March '00, Cover Story: Vowing for Equality - Same Sex Marriages -- Also: Big Brother Broadcasts the Nightly News; The Fruits of Facism - CIA-Socialism in Chile

Issue #24, December/January '99-00, Cover Story: Creationism - Monkeying With Science Education -- Also: Articles by two death row inmates; Senate to World: "Screw You!"; Racism in U.S. colleges

Issue #23, October/November '99, Cover Story: Big House of Horrors - Abuse In America's Jails -- Also: The Religious Left - A Moral Balancing Act; America is Selling Out Taiwan; TJ Walker columns

IMPACT



Downed Animals:
Diseased Food On Your Plate

Was It the Falun Gong or Chinese Deception?
Selling Our Environment for a Barrel of Oil
Selling Ritalin to the World

issue #32

Issue #22, August/September '99, Cover Story: Prisoners of Conscience -- US Political Prisoners -- Also: Space Exploration & Exploitation; America's Ritual Genocide of Iraq

Issue #21, June/July '99, Cover Story: Imprisoning the Mind - Art Censorship in America -- Also: Facing 30; Death with Dignity or a .22; A Patriotic Left

Issue #20, Apr/May '99, Cover Story: The Chaining of America -- Also: The Death Penalty -- Reassessing the Punishment; School of the Americas: Training Foreign Killers

Issue #19, Feb/Mar '99, Cover Story: Population Control: How Many Are Too Many? -- Also: Imprisoning the Masses -- Dark Side of a Prison State; Human Rights Issues

Issue #18, Dec/Jan '98-99, Cover Story: Interview with Michael Moore plus, Are Women Just a Bunch of Boobs -- Also: An Inside Look at the Homeless Problem

Issue #17, Oct/Nov '98, Cover Story: Battle For Governor of Florida -- Also: Sexual Politics in the Workplace; Money Determines our Society (OUT OF PRINT!)

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Issue #15, Jun/Jul '98, Cover Story: CyberSociety -- Also: Sex By Numbers; Confessions of a Phone Psychic; The Inconsistency of Theism (OUT OF PRINT!)

Issue #14, Apr/May '98, Cover Story: ArtsPolitik -- Also: Paranoia; Anal Laws Sodomy Society; Environmental Chaos and Politics

Issue #13, Feb/Mar '98, Cover Story: Human Cloning -- Also: Surviving Bulimia; Purchasing Condoms and Lubes; A News Addict Speaks Out

Issue #12, Dec/Jan '97-98, Cover Story: The Age of Anger -- Also: Preferential Treatment; The Culture of Anonymous Sex; Medical Marijuana

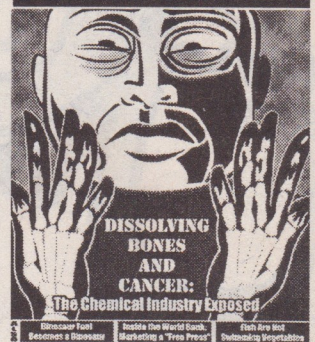
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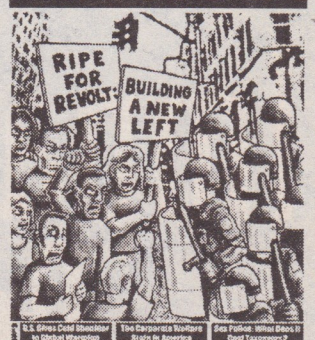
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Dinosaur Fuel Becomes a Dinosaur
Inside the World Bank: Marketing a "Free Press"
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IMPACT



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